

**University of Exeter EdD in TESOL Thesis**

**Between a rock and a hard place: expatriate teacher narratives of  
expectation and exasperation**

**Submitted by**

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## Abstract

In this narrative study on self-initiated expatriate (SIE) faculty, I explore economic, professional, institutional and political discourses as experienced from the perspective of eight participants who have spent most of their working lives teaching in different parts of the world. Neilsen (2009) suggests that English Second Language (ESL) teachers are arguably in a position of privilege in that their services are in great demand across most regions of the world. He explains that not only can they have the opportunity of exploring the country of their choice, but they also participate in its culture and commerce. Far from this perception that ESL teachers are in a position of privilege, researchers have also described ESL teaching as a “marginalized profession” (Johnston 1999, p.255), that ESL teachers have a “volatile social status” (Troudi, 2009, p.67) and that there are “discriminatory hiring practices against NNESTS around the world” (Mahboob, 2010, p.7).

My study on SIE faculty examines all these descriptions by analysing the narratives of SIE faculty; James, Janet, Soyal, Demi, Estee, Medo, Sami Ali and Jack - who have spent most of their working lives teaching in foreign locations across the world. Their personal and professional lives impacted by discourses of professionalism, discourses of education, socio-economic and socio-political discourses prevalent in nation states.

Narrative research constitutes the research design for this thesis project. The stories that emerge from the data reflect my ontological perspective that subjects are produced in relation to the larger structures they inhabit. The sample selected for this study comprised exclusively expatriate language teachers who at the time of interview, had spent 15 or more years teaching ESL in countries other than their homelands. While other studies on ESL expatriate teachers show that expatriate teacher motivation is attributed to personality or psychological factors (Zafar-Khan, 2011; Chapman, Austin, Farah, Wilson and Ridge, 2014; Richardson and

McKenna, 2002), narrative interviews with these eight expatriate teachers revealed that the picture is much larger than the micro-level explanation suggests. Globalization, and the commercial benefit of English as a second language, have created any kind of (personal) condition for an English second language teacher to expatriate. Moreover, discourses in education, discourses in educational institutions, socio-economic and socio-political discourses impact the life-worlds of SIE faculty, and position them subjectively in relation to these dominant discourses. By studying the effects of discourses in society, this study questions how SIE faculty are represented. The discourse analysis (Gee, 2011) approach I used to analyze the narrative interviews explain how political, economic and social discourses impact SIE faculty subjectively. This methodological choice illustrates how language is used to convey particular meanings and how individuals use language to reflect broader influences in society in complex and unique ways. Narratives bring out the voices of SIE faculty, while incorporating theory and literature with personal experience (Holliday, 2002). The study has significance for SIE faculty who may gain a deeper understanding of the inter-relationship of their work with powerful socio-economic and political discourses.

*“She thought about writing novels, but quickly realized that real, human stories were more powerful.”*

***Guy Chazan (2017)***

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I would like to thank my parents for giving me the gift of faith, prayer and belief in a power greater than myself. This devotion has sustained me in the numerous moments of despair during these thesis years.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

SIE	self-initiated expatriate
UAE	United Arab Emirates
ESL	English Second Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
CEFR	Common European Framework for Reference of languages
EMSAT	Emirates Standardized Test
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
L1	First language
L2	Second language
IMF	International Monetary Fund

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Conversations with many expatriate teachers often lead off into phrases such as, “When I was in Korea...”, or “I had a colleague from New Zealand who...”, or, “There was this time when I worked in Egypt..”. Much of English Second Language (ESL) teacher interaction is about these small stories told in the flow of some conversation. Narrative research distinguishes between big stories and small stories. Barkhuizen (2011) says that big story research focusses on narrative knowledge about past events and lived experience. In this narrative study I make space for the small stories that provide contextual detail as well as the larger stories of SIE faculty based on their interviews. In this role I am observer, recorder of life experiences, witness to the vicissitudes of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and lay historian of current events.

Today we have powerful, far-reaching processes of globalization and economic rationality that impact most aspects of social and political life. ESL teachers do work that contributes largely to these processes, but their experiences tend to be overlooked in English language teaching (ELT) research. While ELT research is predominantly about linguistics and methodological aspects of teaching, self-initiated expatriate (SIE) research has focused on work-life experiences of corporates or academics, but hardly anything on SIE faculty teaching English as a second language. This research study investigates the lives of expatriate ESL teachers who have spent most of their working lives away from their home cultures. It is an in-depth narrative exploration, retelling their life-world experiences, focusing on how discourses of work, economy, and socio-political effects impact their long-term careers in host locations.

Until the late 1990s my life in South Africa was quite contained by geographical space. When I graduated from the University of Cape Town with my teacher’s qualifications I got a job teaching English at the same high school I attended as a student. I lived and worked in the same community

for 30 years of my life. Political and economic instability in South Africa is accompanied by violence and affects South Africans on a daily basis. My story of loss is one of countless others who have lost loved ones. When my partner was killed by gangsters I needed to take a break from my job to heal psychologically. At this time in the 1990s there were a number of TEFL courses available to South Africans who wanted to take up one of the numerous job offers out of Taiwan and Korea. My intention was to leave my familiar surroundings which had become difficult to deal with during this period of grief. With my teaching background, getting a TEFL job overseas was relatively easy. However, too many TEFL teachers returning from Asia spoke of racist attitudes they had encountered and the Asian predilection for inculcating American accents in the student population. I effectively left my home country, South Africa in 2001 and have taught in the USA, Oman and the UAE. I make a point of visiting my home country regularly, but the deteriorating social and political situation makes me concerned about repatriation. I frequently come into contact with other TEFL teachers, each with a story of how they came to leave their communities and connections back home and what their plans are for repatriation. This research is my effort to be a witness to their stories.

## **1.1 Rationale for the study**

In an article on teachers' contributions, Troudi (2009, p. 66) states that very little is known about how EFL teachers perceive themselves as classroom teachers and what they think about their profession. This study therefore, seeks to address this deficit in EFL research by following his recommendation to explore "...in depth teachers' views on their own professional lives and how they cope with the demands of the classroom, education system, institutional bureaucracies and the vicariousness of employment."



As I take on this effort to study experience, I do so from the understanding that there are ramifications in international developments in economic, political and social life that impact individuals. My interest is in how macrostructural changes affect individuals in general and for the purposes of this study, SIE faculty. What contributes to the nature of SIE subjectivities, how do they construct the stories of their lives, and what, if anything, could be learned from their life-world experiences?

In addition, the expanding literature on self-initiated expatriation focuses largely on corporate issues affecting expatriate professionals. ESL faculty as a group of self-initiated expatriates are understudied and therefore, under-represented in the literature. My intention with this study is that as an SIE myself, I have access to other SIE faculty and together we respond to the need to understand who are the expat teachers who move and relocate across the globe. This study can be classified as an exploratory study based on qualitative methods. The choice of narrative research was made as a result of a general lack of lifeworld studies of ESL teachers who have spent most of their careers living in host countries.

## **1.2 Purpose and significance of the study**

This narrative study is about the life-world experiences of expatriate ESL teachers and broadly explores the following central research question, how does the individual experience his/her life? As a student of social science, I am interested in the meaning-making practices of human culture. The people who are the subject of my research are SIE faculty, because these are the people who are in my community where I live, work and whom I study.

I explore the nature and complexity of their work as ELT professionals, analysed against Foucauldian concepts of poststructural discourse theory and neoliberal governmentality.

I believe the study is significant because ESL teachers and ELT work are major components of economically-driven processes of globalization and therefore research into the life-world experiences of subjects within these processes merits investigation.

My role as researcher then is two-fold. I report on the stories, the individual accounts, the memories of SIE faculty, about how English language teachers of my generation reached for balance in their professional, personal and aspirational lives. I also make sense of their stories with regard to the macro structures they live in.

## **1.3 Aims, objectives and research questions**

The distinguishable features of this study is that it is about SIE faculty, it is a narrative study, its theoretical framework relies on the work of Foucault (Brown, 2015; Binkley, 2009), and it employs the methodological tool of discourse analysis. It is therefore fitting that I have research aims for each of these features. To begin, this study adds to the existing body of research on self-initiated expatriates by extending it to include the under-researched

inquiries into the experiences of self-initiated expatriate faculty. Moreover, narrative research frequently focusses on identity studies (Barkhuizen, 2011; Vásquez, 2011; Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2008), while my study is about extending research into narratives as embedded in socio-cultural contexts. My intention for this narrative inquiry is to give a voice to a group of people often described as “marginalized” (Johnston, 1999, p.257), have “limited power” (Neilsen, 2009, p. 49) and “mercenary” (Richardson and McKenna, 2002, p.72). My personal interest in the humanities includes a desire to understand human beings in relation to the larger structures they inhabit. I believe that by applying Foucauldian analysis to a current work-life-experience phenomenon such as self-initiated expatriation amongst ESL teachers, I am offering a new perspective of the subjectivity of SIE faculty. I have used discourse analysis as a methodological tool because from the perspective of the humanities, we are essentially language beings. As a narrative researcher, I wish to understand people’s experiences through their own words.

My research seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do SIE faculty frame their experience prior to expatriation?  
How does this framing impact their experience in host countries?
2. How have SIE faculty produced their agency within the socio-political milieux of their experience?

## **1.4 Organization of the thesis**

Following the introduction, chapter 2 presents the history and sociological contexts in which English language teaching is situated. I explain language teaching in the context of the UAE. Chapter 3 is a review of literature. I describe and analyse self-initiated expatriates as a focused area of study. I describe the philosophical influences of postmodernism and post structuralism and their place in the theoretical framework of this research. I

introduce the context of neoliberal governmentality as a framework I will draw on in my analysis. Chapter 4 is a discussion of the methodological underpinnings of the study. I describe the research design and also summarize ethical considerations. In chapter 5 I present the findings according to the narrative research design and draw on theoretical references described in the literature review. In chapter 6 I discuss and interpret the findings, relating the data to the issues raised in the research context, the literature review and methodological implications of the study. Chapter 7 summarizes the study with conclusion and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER 2 CONTEXT

*“There is always a general political context that exists”*

***Punch (2009)***

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, where it is expected of me to orient the reader in terms of place, history and the general political context, as suggested by Punch (2009) in this opening quote, I have found while doing the research, that there is little that can be called general, everything can be subsumed in the political, and the context is shifting as I write this. There is much that can be said about ELT work. From its origins with colonial relations to the critiques against teaching methodologies that reflect British and American educational discourses, I feel the need to acknowledge that as an expatriate teacher, I, along with the participants in this study, am multi-positioned. In this chapter, I hope to highlight some of the complex relations brought on by time, place and geography.

The research participants in this study have spent the majority of their ELT experience in several countries, all of which were impacted by the growth and expansion of English as the language of international commerce, politics and culture. This fact accounts for their employment and international work experience. My aim in this chapter therefore, is to present two main areas of interest. Firstly, I describe the historical background and subsequent rise of English as a second or foreign language in a globalizing world. The purpose of presenting such an overview is to highlight some of the economic and political influences that shape TEFL and impact the lives of SIE faculty. To compile this section, I consulted perspectives from different sources; viz. literature about political and economic analysis of globalization, as well as practitioners in the field of

ESL. Secondly, I discuss the social, political and economic context of the UAE where this study was conducted.

I start by presenting an overview of the history of ESL, from its origins and subsequent development as a recognized academic discipline. I provide some background of the growth of TESOL in other parts of the world. I also discuss the aspect of ELT as an industry to contextualize the experiences of the participants in this study. Private language schools feature prominently in the lived experiences of many SIE faculty, therefore, an overview of the private ELT sector is described.

This research study is concerned with SIE faculty who currently live and work in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In addition to the historical and general background, I also present a description of the UAE educational context, starting with a historical overview. In addition, I highlight some of the tensions that exist between government policies to modernize and usher in a knowledge economy in the UAE and the reality which exists for Emirati students. These national educational policies have consequences for SIE faculty. The chapter gives an overview of the institutions of higher education in the UAE where the participants in this study are employed. By providing a sense of the educational aims of the leadership and the economic and political influences in the UAE, I am outlining the context in which the research was conducted, which will then help to interpret the data.

## **2.1 An overview of the development of ELT**

There are a variety of acronyms associated with English language teaching (ELT). TESOL is the name for both the field of teaching English to speakers of other languages as well as the international professional organization for practitioners of teaching English as a second language (TESL) and of English as a foreign language (TEFL) (Alatis, 2005). In the 50th anniversary of the academic journal, TESOL Quarterly, Canagarajah (2016) states that

there is a need for disciplined historiography of ELT as a profession. Some authors have attempted to chart the development of ELT. Gray (1997) traces the origins of TESOL in the United States to the 1960s when it was officially recognized as an academic discipline, however it is understood that English language teaching has been going on for centuries.

TESOL, as an organization, emerged to accommodate the growing number of immigrants, refugees and international students. Braine (2010) says that English was being taught as a foreign language in the 15th century with the rise of England as a maritime power. Neilsen (2009) traces the history of ELT to its earliest roots as contact between Old English and Norman French (circa 11<sup>th</sup> century). Canagarajah (2016) suggests that the history of ELT is more circular than it is linear. One of the examples he quotes are the religious refugees in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe. When they arrived in London they were given English lessons by men who themselves were refugees (Neilsen, 2009). As recent history shows, socio-political change in countries that saw the influx of refugees from conflict zones similarly conditioned the need for ELT.

A defining moment in the history of ELT is Kachru's (1992) work on varieties of English. He explained the world-wide growth and geographic expansion of EFL from native-speaker countries. The World Englishes paradigm is a model of the inner circle where English is the native language, the outer circle where English is the second language and expanding circle where English is a foreign language. Braine (2010) says that any discussion of the spread of English internationally needs to include the nonnative speaker (NNS) movement. The effects of globalization, since 1995, saw an upsurge of ELT research from expanding circle countries and a decrease in ELT research from inner circle countries (Canagarajah, 2016). Since the 1990s, the hegemony of native-speaking teachers has been challenged (Forman, 2010). Research participants in my study have work experience in outer circle (Europe) and expanding circle countries (Asia). In addition, some of

the research participants in this study are nonnative speakers from expanding circle countries (Middle East) and some are native English speakers from inner circle (the UK) and outer circle countries (South Africa). This information is detailed in chapter 4.

## **2.2 The industry of EFL**

Neilsen (2009, p. 16) describes ELT as a “complex field”. It has characteristics of both profession and industry. The growth of TESOL is due to political and economic forces that ushered geopolitical change. Philipson and Skutnabb (1996) point out that it made economic sense for countries such as the UK to make as much of the world as English-speaking as possible. They suggest that teaching English as a second language has the design of industry and brought in big business for the British economy, bolstered by publishers, language schools, job opportunities and professional organizations. Pennycook (1994) gives an account of the rise of the British Council as an institution supporting British commercial and political interests. In the 1970s it claimed to be the world authority on TEFL/TESL, providing goods and services in the form of teaching centres, teacher training courses, offering scholarships for people to study in the UK, and supplying teaching materials to promote the spread of English. While UK-based commerce and cultural influence furthered the demand for English, after the second world war, American global economic influence extended this expansion. Today brands from English-speaking countries are global. The marketing of films, pop culture, CNN and fast food chains is referred to as “McDonaldization” with the aim of creating global customers who want global services by global suppliers (Philipson and Skutnabb, 1996. p.439). Jones and Bradwell (2007, p. 8) detail an extensive list of American brands of food, lifestyle and travel that bring American values and English words to “far-flung corners of the world.” Similarly, Pennycook’s (1994, p. 4) reflection on the pervasiveness of English, that “English seems to turn up



everywhere”, is the catalyst that motivates him to want teachers of English to understand their work differently.

A reported 1 billion people worldwide learn English (Beare, 2017) as a second language, and because of market forces, it offers significant business opportunities. With English offering economic and cultural advantages, widespread interest in English means that there is a demand for teachers of English as a foreign language. In this section I examine the features that define ELT as industry.

Chowdhury and Le Ha (2014, p. 65) make reference to the commodification of international education as, “the deliberate transformation of the educational process into commodity form, for the purpose of commercial transaction”. They explain that TESOL is an example of commodification, where English is constructed as an efficient means of transfer of information. It is supported intellectually by academic disciplines such as ELT, ESL, EFL and TESOL. Neilsen (2009) suggests that in the 20<sup>th</sup> century these professional organizations developed parallel to ELT as a service industry. Berlitz, for example, was started to cater to the needs of immigrants in the United States. There was a large demand for practical English instruction to help them assimilate and eventually the organization expanded into a network of 200 schools in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. With such expansion ELT developed as a service industry, supplying English as a commodity. Today the private ELT sector is characterized as a service industry with a market orientation. The commercial success of private language schools depends on satisfied clients who may recommend the training courses offered by such schools. In addition, intensive training courses are available to university graduates who would pay to be trained as an English language teacher in a short period of time. Neilsen (2009) suggests that marketing these training courses to candidates who pay for qualifications that are recognized by the private sector is part of the commodification process of ELT.

## **2.3 Globalization and the UAE**

In this section I look at the growth of the UAE broadly from its creation as a nation state more than 40 years ago. The background information I provide is the educational, socio-political and economic context for where the participants in my study live and are currently employed. This section presents insight into the economic history of the UAE, and subsequently, the global flows of workers to the region. I give a description of the kinds of tertiary institutions available in the UAE where the sample in this study work.

### **2.3.1 An overview of economic development in the UAE**

During the 1960s and 1970s the oil boom in Gulf states resulted in dynamic changes in the economic sectors of these states. Since then the UAE has been a commodity-based economy. Today shipments of oil and gas account for 40 percent of total exports. In recent years the UAE government has taken measures to diversify the economy and reduce dependence on its natural resources. Huge financial investments have been made in tourism, banking and construction. At present, the UAE with its focus on diversification, is considered to be one of the most developed countries in the Arab Gulf. The latest Global Connectedness Index cites the UAE as one of the top 10 most connected countries in the world as a result of its significant investments in trade and infrastructure (Sadaqat, 2017). In their efforts to create Dubai and Abu Dhabi as global cities, UAE policymakers have invested and are still expanding their shipping ports, airports and efficiency in cargo transport.

The decades following independence saw rapid growth of infrastructure, with large numbers of skilled and semi-skilled expatriates flowing into the nation to fill several niches in the labour market. Expatriate labour was hired to compensate for the shortage of skilled labour in the Gulf states.

In 2013, the total population of the UAE was recorded to be 9.2 million. The expatriate population comprised most of that number, with 7.8 million, while Emirati nationals made up the remaining 1.4 million. The UAE government aims to balance the demographic mix between expatriates and UAE nationals by 2021 ("Population and demographic mix", 2017).

### **2.3.2 Tertiary education in the UAE**

The need to grow a stable and viable economy in the UAE has, since the 1970s, been linked to increasing and improving educational standards. After federation, the UAE constitution stated that education was to be a fundamental factor for progress of the nation. The UAE government makes provision for free education for all UAE nationals from K-12 to university. The development of the UAE education system is based on a hybrid of western pedagogical models (Godwin, 2006).

According to a report by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific research (2012), there are 102 higher education institutions in the UAE. There are three institutions supported by the federal government (Higher Colleges of Technology, UAE University and Zayed University). There are also private institutions and all of these are heavily staffed by expatriate faculty. In their bids to modernize and reduce their dependence on an expatriate workforce, Gulf nation states like the UAE are supportive of higher education. A large part of government expenditure goes towards education. In 2017, 20.5% of fiscal spending was allocated to education. This amounts to AED 10.2 billion ("UAE gov't spending revealed for first nine months of 2016", 2016).

### 2.3.3 Current educational context

According to Education Vision 2020 (2000), the last quarter of the 20th century saw the Gulf States becoming aware of the need to address their education policies. Factors which gave rise to re-evaluating education as a structural component of Arab society were the huge costs of the Gulf War (1990-1991), poor oil revenues (oil prices dropped in the 1980s and 1990s) and the need to develop a national labour force which would maintain security at times of crises. These external political factors saw the emergence of “macro-actors”, which according to Carter and Sealy (2000) are the influential people whose actions and decisions have far-reaching consequences. The following quote encapsulates the intentions for education of the leadership in the UAE.

*“In our country, the political leadership has realized that investment in human capital is the best long-term investment. High quality education is the tool for societal development and progress.”*

***Education Vision 2020 (2000, p. 3)***

When academic development became a political and national mission, Sheikh Mohamed Bin Rashid al Makhtoum, Vice President and ruler of Dubai, is noted as the champion of restructuring education in the UAE. One of the macro-agents of modernizing education was the minister of higher education and scientific research (until 2013), Shaikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, His vision was to establish the UAE as a knowledge society. Wiseman (2011) says that economic and political stability in the Gulf has resulted in Gulf nations calling for nationalization of their knowledge workers, referred to as “Emiratization” in the UAE, and “Saudiization” in Saudi Arabia.

### **2.3.4 ESL in the UAE: language policy**

UAE nationals speak Arabic, the official language of the UAE, but study programs are delivered and assessed via the medium of English rather than Arabic. The comprehensive plan of Education Vision 2020 (2000, p. 32) focusses on, “education to Emiratize workforce and culture”. In the Gulf, English has high status and is thought to bring about educational and economic advantages (Habbash and Troudi, 2015). The Ministry of Education in the UAE has structured a curriculum where Arabic-speaking learners are introduced to English in primary school. It is taught as a subject in secondary schools and in most tertiary institutions it is the medium of instruction.

The education programme as laid out by this regulation makes provision for the teaching of English in primary school. As for secondary schooling, alongside science and technology education, the importance of language is stated as the reason, “to understand what happens in other parts of the world which has become a global village” (Education Vision 2020, p. 91). English is the medium of instruction at tertiary institutions such as the 17 branches of the Higher Colleges of Technology, Zayed University and the UAE University. English is used to teach science subjects in tertiary institutions. As the global language of commerce, the rationale to promote English use and instruction in this way is to ensure that Emirati students will have better employment opportunities (Troudi and Al Hafidh, 2017).

### **2.3.5 Higher education**

The academic boom in GCC states was facilitated by oil wealth. Five years after the UAE was established, the first university, UAE University, was established in 1976. Today there are different kinds of institutions of higher learning, catering to Emirati students and other nationalities. Federal universities cater only to Emirati students. These are Zayed University, the

Higher Colleges of Technology and UAE University. Tertiary institutions uphold the strong religious and cultural values of Emirati society. The Higher Colleges of Technology have separate campuses for men and women in all the seven emirates. Zayed University and the UAE University work with men and women as separate student bodies, but locate both gender groups on the same campus in separate areas. Students in federal institutions abide by the national dress code. Although male and female student bodies are segregated, tertiary institutions, irrespective of male or female campuses, are staffed by foreign national men and women academics, service and management.

Institutions like the University of Sharjah, Ajman University of Science and Technology and Al Ghurair University in Dubai accept both Emirati and foreign nationals. These institutions operate with mixed gender student bodies. Partnerships have been created with internationally-recognized universities, such as New York University which supports New York University Abu Dhabi in its efforts to become “one of the world’s great research universities” ([www.saadiyat.ae](http://www.saadiyat.ae)). A similar partnership saw the establishment of the Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi in 2006. Dubai International Academic City is a free zone dedicated to higher education. There are 27 universities from nine countries to service the 25 000 students from 140 nationalities ([www.diacedu.ae](http://www.diacedu.ae)).

### **2.3.6 Education vision vs education reality**

It may be noted from the preceding description that there is a committed focus on developing institutions of higher learning in the UAE and developing them to high international standards. This is one of the factors accounting for the large numbers of EFL teachers. However, the effects of promulgating English in education has led to controversy over the status of Arabic in relation to English. Critics of the education policy raise concerns about the teaching of core subjects in science and mathematics through the

medium of English. Troudi (2007; Troudi and Al Hafidh, 2017) state that tertiary level students are intimidated by the idea of studying their subject specialities in English. Wiseman (2011) says that GCC nationals show low test scores in science and maths on international tests. Furthermore, the lack of scientific research coming out of the UAE is a challenge to higher education in the country.

To be considered a knowledge society, excellence in education is an essential feature. Emirati students' performance on international test scores between 2008-2010 shows that the UAE ranks very low in mathematics, science and reading proficiency (Assaf, 2011). The UAE government has called for students to rank in the top 20 by 2021. Results from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an organization which provides education rankings based on international tests showed that in 2016 the UAE scored on the low end of the rank. Of the 70 nations that were tested, the UAE ranked 46 for science and reading and 47 for mathematics (Pennington, 2016).

The reality in the UAE is that a lot of resources have been directed into restructuring education, but the current state of higher education still reflects inadequacies while efforts are being made to change the factors responsible. Critics have said that it does not serve students to study core subjects through the medium of English, when they are confronted with the difficulties of syntax, structure and lexicon (Troudi, 2007; Troudi and Jendli, 2011). Students who enter bachelor programs are required to take English proficiency tests. The Ministry of Education has compiled a test based on universal standardized tests, such as IELTS (International English Language Testing System) and CEFR (Common European Framework for Reference of languages). Known as the EMSAT (Emirates Standardized Test), students need a minimum score of 1100, which is equivalent to modest language user, i.e. IELTS Band 5 or CEFR B1. In their informal discussions, many professional teachers suggest that this is not a

sufficiently advanced level to succeed in bachelor studies. By comparison, most UK universities require a minimum entry of IELTS 5.5 (<http://www.ieltsasia.org>). In Canadian universities the minimum IELTS requirement is 6.5 ([www.studyabroad.shiksha.com](http://www.studyabroad.shiksha.com)).

Troudi, quoting Bielenberg (2007, p.11), presents the argument that students' limited learning in mathematics and science are not necessarily a result of lack of student motivation, or a lack of teaching expertise. The difficulty lies in vocabulary, grammar and rhetorical devices students encounter when studying these subjects in English. Similarly, it was stated that the inability to read at the required speed is a hindrance for Arab pupils on PISA tests (Pennington, 2016).

### **2.3.7 Cost of education**

In considering the strategic plans for education at national level, we may consider the role money plays as a structural tool in the restructuring of Emirati society through educational transformation. In the UAE education is free for Emiratis. This practice stems from the beginnings of the union with its slogan, "Education for all" (Education Vision 2020, 2000, p.28). Social and economic advancement in these countries were a result of oil revenues. For this reason, education "was not an attracting power to nationals" (Education Vision 2020, 2000, p.3).

Romani (2009) states that since the mid 2000s GCC countries have spent \$50 billion on higher education. With the creation of a new education vision in the UAE, Education Vision 2020 (2000) states that governmental and non-governmental financial support is required. With such extensive financial support for educational development, the UAE is able to rely heavily on foreign teachers.



### **2.3.8 Expatriate teachers**

There is a substantial focus on developing leading higher education institutions in the UAE. In general, the Arab Gulf states have become a major destination for EFL teachers from all over the world, due to their competitive salaries and benefit packages for employees. In the UAE population figures and demographic characteristics of the resident population (Emiratis and foreigners) are not yet disclosed to the public in real time (De Bel Air, 2015). While no official statistics are available, a significant proportion of expatriate educators employed in tertiary institutions teach in bridging programs designed to get students to a certain level of proficiency in English before they enter degree programs. A large number of expatriate educators also teach in degree programs. Class numbers range from 17 – 20 students (Centre for Higher Education, 2012) with teaching hours from 20 to 24 hours per week on average.

Research studies suggest that tax-free salary, comfortable accommodation, and opportunities for outdoor adventure are motivating factors to teach in Gulf countries (Zafar Khan, 2011; Schoepp, 2011). Thorne (2015) suggests that it is essential for expatriates coming to live and work in the Gulf to develop an understanding of Islam and the principles on which it is based. Expatriate teachers need to observe dress code regulations on campuses. Basically, these are to abide by rules of modesty and formal work attire. Teachers are expected to teach subject matter that is considered culturally appropriate and avoid content that might be considered controversial by UAE standards.

Teachers are employed on a contract basis, usually 2-3 years and these contracts can be renewed. In addition to their monthly salaries, teachers receive medical benefits, educational allowances for children and annual airfare to return to their home country. Work conditions are of a high standard. Classrooms are equipped with educational technology and

teachers have sufficient support and resources to facilitate effective learning.

However, faculty also encounter obstacles in their line of work. Research studies on the UAE education system, such as Aubrey (2014) and MacLeod (2013), have stated the varied challenges teachers face with regard to student engagement and discipline. Furthermore, the huge number of expatriate teachers, hired at considerable government expense, has done little to reverse the lack of change in research accomplishment. The public higher education sector in the UAE offers diplomas, bachelor degrees, masters degrees and doctoral programmes. Chapman et al (2014) observe that despite extensive financial investment in higher education, no UAE university ranks among the top 300 in the world.

Researchers such as Gardner (1995), Richardson and McKenna (2002), Chapman et al (2014), and Thorne (2015), have indicated that both government and expatriate teachers value transience. With teachers not expecting to stay in academic posts, there is less commitment to building an academic career. Chapman et al (2014) state that participants in their study argue that educational institutions cannot logically expect educational professionals to encourage post-graduate research when faculty themselves are not sure how long they will be in the UAE. Thorne (2015) observes that the high turnover of faculty, in addition to the negative impact on the development of research groups, is impacted by a lack of continuity and hence, limited capacity to build partnerships with companies and employers.

## **Summary**

In qualitative research, there are reams of resources and second and third editions of reams, detailing aspects of thesis writing such as how to implement methodologies, compile literature reviews and how to be

impactful with your data. The research setting, however, receives a passing mention. The way I have interpreted research setting flows from my interpretive perspective which I will explain in the next section and subsequent chapters to follow. Suffice for now, is that the research setting is part of the world that is “always already there” (Crotty, 1998, p. 44). Crotty (1998), reflecting on Merleau-Ponty, explains that the world and objects in the world are our partners in the generation of meaning. I have interpreted the world and objects in the world as the political, economic and cultural synergies which have developed and are developing the context of a globalizing world.

My approach has been to present a landscape where SIE faculty are multi-positioned, working in a field that has a political and economic history that orients their livelihood. In seeking to understand the experiences of SIE faculty it is necessary to have an understanding of the contexts of ELT work. In this chapter therefore, I have examined the political, economic and cultural synergies which have developed and are developing the context of a globalizing world. I have highlighted the development of ESL as market rationalization. In this chapter the focus has been on how globalization is a driving force in the business of facilitating global communication. In particular, I have considered the impact of globalization on ELT by looking at political and economic developments that gave rise to the spread of English. I have considered how the field of ELT as a whole includes the professional environment as well as presenting perspectives of how English language teaching is perceived as a commodity (Pitsuwan, 2014; Chowdhury and Le Ha , 2014) in countries where there is a demand for SIE faculty. The perception of English as a commodity has brought work opportunities for ESL teachers and current and future globalizing trends will impact the demand for that commodity.

I have examined some of the complex issues of education, economic growth and political vision in the UAE. My hope is that this chapter will

contribute to an understanding of the narratives of SIE faculty through analysis of the economic, educational and socio-political issues in ELT.

## **CHAPTER 3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

Expatriate TEFL teachers are the focus of my study. They are largely a group of professional instructional staff who, of their own choosing, leave their home countries to teach English in host locations across the world. As such, they fall into a group of expatriates known as self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). In this review there is focus on four key areas. Starting off, there is a description of general views of self-initiated expatriates; looking at definitions of SIEs in terms of the criteria used to identify them. Next, I investigate the reasons why language teachers expatriate. The criteria for describing SIEs who are language teachers (SIE faculty) is then problematized, followed up with a critique of comparative views on the literature of SIE faculty.

Leading on from a critique of the current research on SIE academics, I provide reasons for the theoretical framework of my study. Foucault's Discourse Theory (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014) has been selected as the theoretical framework for this study because of its applicability in analyzing the social, economic and political context that impact people and define them in terms of the dominant systems that shape a society and a way of thinking in a period in time.

I contextualize the foundations of discourse theory, illuminating the principle proponents of post-structuralist thought whose ideas I will be advancing in relation to this research on SIEs.

I also introduce Foucault's concept of governmentality (Foucault and Sennellart, 2008) as a social and economic concept to analyse the career objectives and lifestyle choices that SIE faculty make as they navigate their international TEFL careers.

### 3.1 Preamble

In order to formulate this review, I have a number of points of departure which I gleaned from the literature I have reviewed for this study. The first such point is from research studies on SIEs. The area of SIEs is well-researched in the field of human resource management. 47 articles were retrieved from EBSCO host, revealing that a large number of qualitative and quantitative studies on SIEs were done in Europe (Denmark, Ireland, European Union (EU) and Asia (Greater China, Korea, Tokyo). A large number of SIEs live and work in the UAE, however, there is to date one study on SIEs *per se*, in the UAE (Stalker and Mavin, p. 2011). This study focused on the experience of SIE women in a range of business sectors. Expatriate teachers based in the UAE have been researched in a number of unpublished doctoral theses (St John, 2011; MacLeod, 2013; Aubrey, 2014; Thorne, 2015). The SIE experiences of academics is explored in Lauring and Selmer (2014) who did a survey on SIE academics in Greater China. Froese (2012) interviewed 30 academics in Korea about their reasons to expatriate. Schoepp's (2011) interest in surveying 364 expatriate faculty from public higher institutions was to investigate faculty retention in the UAE. In light of the fact that the UAE is under-represented in SIE literature, despite the large numbers of expatriate academics in the UAE, my research intention is to address this gap.

#### 3.1.1 Definitions

*"Expats prioritise improving their life and finding a new challenge, rather than looking for a quick salary increase from their move abroad"*  
**HSBC Expat explorer survey, 2015**

Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) is the term used for individuals who personally take charge of their careers without the direct support of an organization. They are individuals who themselves make the decision to live and work abroad. They resign from their job and relocate abroad,

finding a job in the host location. They are distinct from organizational expatriates (OEs), so called because they have been sponsored and assigned by their parent organizations to the foreign location (Cerdin and Selmer, 2014).

Cerdin and Selmer (2014) use four criteria to define SIEs, the first being that the individual makes the decision to go abroad of his or her own initiative and will. They suggest a criterion of “self-initiated international relocation” (2014, p.1289) should be included in the definition of an SIE. Secondly, SIEs initiate an international move qualified as expatriation, since at the moment of their departure from the home country, they intend to repatriate one day. They are foreign national employees, temporarily living ‘ex-patria’ (usually two to five years). During their time abroad they have a period of regular employment. Thirdly, SIEs are individuals with intentions of a temporary stay in the host country. Their fourth criterion is that expatriate status has predominantly been awarded to individuals with skilled/professional qualifications.

### **3.1.2 Research on expatriate academics**

Academics who are SIEs, also referred to as self-selecting expatriates, are among those expatriate professionals who have individual self-interest in advancing their careers (Schoepp, 2011; Richardson and McKenna, 2002). A study on SIE academics who seek job opportunities in universities outside their home countries, have found that they experience relatively few barriers in transferring their skills from one country to another (Selmer and Luring 2010, p.170). They identify 5 broad reasons why academics expatriate; the first being a need for adventure. The search for new experiences they suggest is the main reason, followed by a perception that overseas work experience could improve their career prospects. The third reason is family considerations and doing what is considered best for the whole family. Financial gain is cited as the fourth reason. The incentive to make and save

a large amount of money is another reason influencing academic SIEs. The desire to escape negative conditions in the home country is cited as a fifth reason. Expatriation is seen as an opportunity for life change.

### **3.1.3 Exploring the problematic**

The qualifying criteria of what defines an SIE need to be seen in light of how far these criteria apply to faculty who are SIEs. For this reason, I will begin my discussion by problematizing the criteria as stated in Cerdin and Selmer (2014) in terms of the published research in the field of SIEs in general. All forms of employment start with employers or institutions advertising what they require from potential job seekers and employees searching for what suits them. This is the starting point of my discussion. I follow this with an explanation of how an organizational ethos may strain commitment from employees. Next I look at the presence of expatriate teachers from the cultural perspective of the host country.

### **3.1.4 Theoretical ideals or practical pitfalls?**

A closer analysis of SIEs and their potential employers may highlight that theoretical negotiations between the two groups are incongruent in practical instances. There are pitfalls for both employer and SIE. I will look at some of these pitfalls as theoretical ideals with practical complexities. Selmer and Luring (2010) did a study on academics as a specific type of SIE. They define SIE academics along the same lines as Cerdin and Selmer (2014); adding that SIE academics have specific skills which make them highly mobile in the international job market. Theoretically, this might be true, but as Gardner (1995, p. 298) noted, expatriate teachers generally come from educational backgrounds where the goal of education is to weed out the students who will underperform in tertiary education. Gardner's (ibid) report on teacher education in the UAE states that the educational objective of the



UAE is to encourage nationals to stay and acquire the skills needed to build the nation. According to Troudi and Jendli (2011), the UAE needs to have a competitive national workforce to play an active role in an era of globalization. The implications of this discrepancy between employer needs and expatriate teacher experience may have consequences for the accumulation of expatriate teacher stress; i.e. teaching underperforming students, or students who show a lack of motivation to achieve curriculum objectives often means that teachers come up against reluctant learners. (Aubrey, 2015; McLeod, 2013).

### **3.1.5 Career advancement or temporary stop gap?**

SIE faculty find themselves in a situation where their prior work experience does not match their contractual obligation with what educational institutions in the UAE expect from expatriate teachers. Researchers like Gardner (1995) and Chapman et al (2014) have found that expatriate teachers do not envision long stays in the UAE. A qualitative study of 38 instructors in tertiary institutions in the UAE was conducted by Chapman et al (2014). They found that “many instructors coming to teach in the UAE do not expect to stay” (2014, p.141). However, the extent to which the findings of their respective studies can be generalized is raised in both research articles. The tension between leaving the UAE and staying is an aspect of expatriate motivation I wish to further explore in my study. Schoepp’s (2011) survey of more than 300 expatriate faculty members from UAE public tertiary institutions revealed some reasons why expatriate faculty are motivated to leave. Faculty concerns included not being able to participate in the governance and decision-making process. Survey results also showed that the sample judged the scholarly environment to be weak and the library insufficient (2011, p. 69). Given the temporary nature of their placement in the UAE, is there a gap, as Rodriguez and Scurry (2014, p.1051) state, between career expectations, career choices and success?

The concept of what is temporary for expatriate faculty is not clearly defined in the research. In my exploratory study on SIE faculty currently working in the UAE, I seek to understand how the idea of a temporary stop gap is experienced.

### **3.1.6 Human capital or foreign role models?**

Selmer and Luring (2010) say that academic skills give SIE academics a bargaining power with potential employers. They also serve as merit, adding to their human and social capital (2010:170). According to Rodriguez and Scurry (2014) importance is given to foreign work experience as central to developing key competencies for a career in a global economy. In the UAE SIE faculty are hired based on their teaching qualifications and experience. They are hired to teach in intensive language programmes to help students reach the required level of English proficiency, so that they may gain entrance into Bachelor studies. Gardner (1995) offers an alternative view of the large numbers of expatriate teachers in the UAE educational system. He questions the practice of hiring foreign teachers as educational role models. He sees this at odds with the objective of building the UAE's national pride and social demand for education. The socio-linguistic and socio-political consequences of this emphasis on English medium instruction and the appropriacy of western knowledge to the local context have been raised as concerns (Syed, 2003; Baalawi, 2008; Troudi and Al-Hafidh, 2017).

### **3.1.7 Perspectives on motivation**

Chapman et al (2014) interviewed 38 instructors working in higher education institutions in the UAE. This qualitative study does not refer to their expatriate participants as SIEs, but their findings show a similar list of motivations as to why they come to the UAE. Similar to Selmer and Luring

(2010), the largest group in the Chapman et al (2014) study was the “adventure seekers” (2014, p.139). Richardson and McKenna (2002) did a study on 30 British expatriate academics. They also report that the most common reason for academics choosing expatriation was the need to explore. They suggest that for this group, expatriation is more about personal fulfillment than professional opportunities. Chapman et al (2014, p. 39) found that the largest group in their study were the “academic nomads”, so-called because of their 2 to 4 year assignments in various locations around the world. This group viewed their stay in the UAE as “just the most recent stop” (ibid). Rodriguez and Scurry (2014, p.1048) refer to this approach to expatriate work as “new career” thinking, i.e. workers engage in mobility and adjust their career behaviour to fulfil personal priorities (e.g. family or children). An important feature of these new careers is workers’ focus on personal fulfillment and learning, where success is constructed in their own terms.

The second largest group in the Chapman et al (2014, p.140) study were the “root seekers”, a moniker which corresponds with Selmer and Luring’s (2010) third reason. For this group, the needs of family superceded professional gain. According to Richardson and McKenna (2002), the needs of supporting a family was the driving force. The participants who identified this as the motivating factor to expatriate chose Saudi Arabia and the UAE to work as these were higher paying destinations than other countries. Rodriguez and Scurry (2014) refer to a fundamental shift in the nature of careers from linear to multidirectional, where individuals identify alternative choices for themselves and construct career paths to suit their needs.

### **3.1.8 Cataloguing a critique**

In this section I take stock of the main motivating factors that occur with regularity in SIE research. These are firstly, interpersonal relations that

affect SIEs, secondly, career considerations and thirdly, financial gain. In the following paragraphs, I assess the findings of researchers in the field.

With respect to interpersonal relations, Cerdin and Selmer (2014) take cognizance of the fact that the individual may feel more or less forced to relocate internationally. All such decisions may involve a host of concerns not directly emanating from the situation of the individual. For example, a decision to move abroad could be based on the family situation, and the economic, political, societal and religious context at home and/or in the host country. "Comfort seekers", the smallest group in the Chapman et al (2014, p.140) study, express such a motivation for expatriating to the UAE. Described as a group composed of cross-ethnic marriages, they find it easier for themselves and their families to live in the multi-ethnic society of the UAE rather than live in their home countries.

Selmer and Luring (2010) found that career considerations, in particular, the possibility of improving job prospects, are why academics expatriate. However, career prospects is a factor of reduced importance in the Chapman et al (2014) study. All the groups identified in the study regarded their employment as "inherently insecure" (2014, p.141), but that teaching in the UAE allowed them to focus on other aspects of their lives such as adventure, family and less stress. Insecurity with respect to jobs is due to the tension between having a huge expatriate workforce and government's need to have a skilled Emirati workforce. More than twenty years ago Gardner (1995, p. 293) noted that the government's aim was to ensure that the expatriate workforce "... are transients and that most will go home." As recently as 2014, Chapman et al (2014) are saying the same thing, that the UAE government does not want instructional staff to stay, and neither do instructors want to stay for long periods. My study will explore whether or not this finding applies to the sample in my study and furthermore, what motivates SIE faculty to want to stay in their host location.

With respect to financial gain, Selmer and Luring (2010) found that younger SIE academics in their study were more concerned with financial reasons and career opportunities than older SIE academics. Similarly, Chapman et al (2014) found that financial compensation was not a major attraction for expatriate instructors in their study. Richardson and McKenna (2002) also report that only three of the participants in their study identified money as a primary motivating factor. These participants cited family needs as the reason to make more money. With respect to motivations to remain in the host country, Schoepp's (2011, p.68) study found that salary and benefits were, "far and away the leading factors." This finding is similar to the most recent HSBC Expat Explorer Survey (2017). According to this survey, the UAE is ranked among the top 5 countries for increases in expatriate income.

The motivations as outlined by Selmer and Luring (2010), Chapman et al (2014), and (Richardson and McKenna (2002) reveal the hopes of a group of people, but what were those hopes born out of; and moreover, do those motivations for relocating change during their experiences. If they do change, what fuels that change? We also need a more defined perspective from the other side of that choice to expatriate. To what extent are the hopes of expatriate individuals met in the host relocation?

### **3.1.9 Extending the argument**

To summarize this section on SIEs, Cerdin and Selmer's (2014, p.1290) definition criteria are useful for their application to SIE faculty. To summarize, these criteria are; self-initiated international relocation, regular employment, intentions of a temporary stay, and skilled/professional qualifications. The criteria that have been explained in the studies analysed the personal, the self-contained and individual point of view of SIE choices. Studies that focus on motivation of expatriates (Richardson and McKenna, 2002; Chapman et al, 2014; Selmer and Luring , 2010) have persuasively

separated the list of criteria as gleaned from their respective investigations into compartments of reasoning. My post-structuralist sense of disorder views structuration of knowledge as antithetical to how people live and experience the interplay of discourses that condition their subject status. In the next section I will elaborate on my understanding and interpretation of discourse theory, which I will apply to my research into the work and life experiences of SIE academics. The research needs to expand to see what influences in a particular society position an expatriate family and compel them to relocate when expatriation seems like the better choice. What socio-political or economic factors militate to position an individual to consider expatriation as a hopeful choice? As a way of approaching an understanding of these social factors, I look at a conceptual theory that interprets reality from the perspective of the social and political, rather than the individual (Scheurich, 1997). The perspective I wish to include in my study of expatriate EFL teacher experience is that experience is always mediated by social processes and discourses (Burr, 2003). In the next section, I explore this further.

## **3.2 Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory**

*“You say I create my own reality. I would say to you in response, and what forces do you use exactly in the creation of your reality? What are you drawing on? What’s your currency?”*

**Caroline Myss**

### **3.2.1 Background**

Post-modernism and post-structuralism converged to come up with a theory on the discursive nature of society. Its linguistic roots can be traced to French structural linguist Ferdinand de Saussure’s relational theory of language. Saussure argued that language is a system of formal differences in which the meaning of a word is not determined by its reference to an

underlying entity (the signified) but by its relational placing in the web-like structure of language. Following the insights of linguistic theory, PSDT, the term used by Panizza and Miorelli (2013), alternatively, Discourse Theory (Townshend, 2003) sees society as a meaningful, discursively constructed, system of differential relations between its constitutive elements. However, while in Saussure's theory of language the meaning of a word is fully determined by its relational location in the structure of a given language, PSDT emphasises that social orders are never fully structured, but open to political interventions and dislocations that make it impossible to ground them in an ultimate foundation, hence the *post-structuralist* label (Panizza and Miorelli, 2013). Post-structuralists like Derrida argued that for things to be intelligible, they must be part of a wider framework of meaning (i.e. a discourse). PSDT is acutely aware of the relational aspect of words and intended meaning. Meaning is considered contextual and variable.

### **3.2.2 A researcher's orientation**

In the next section I present my understanding of how politics, economics and power converge through discourse on a single moment in history. I employ my knowledge of the main elements of discourse theory as an introduction to the reader that the research I will engage in is linked to a line of thought. Here I am asking how would the lineage of post-structural thinkers, Derrida, Foucault, and Barthes, have interpreted the institutional arrangements that find their way into a contemporary problematic? Rather than a retelling of complex theoretical issues of post-structuralism, I am offering a perspective of how I made these ideas my own.

### **3.2.3 A discursive interpretation of a media uproar**

I share the post-structuralist perspective advanced by Roland Barthes (Crotty, 1998) that a reader needs to be an active creator of meaning. As

an expatriate teacher living and working in the UAE, I read media reports on the debate over the slaying of a lion in southern Africa where I originally come from, as a “writerly text” (Crotty, 1998, p. 204). This means that the reader engages with what is “unsettling and crisis-provoking” (ibid) and is a contrast to “readerly” texts where the reader is passive and conforms to a conventional subject position which is the cultural norm. Post-structural thought is acutely critical of the day-to-day impulses of society which we express through our choice of words.

By way of explanation, we could view the debate over the killing of Cecil the lion as a dispute of words drawing on their own discourses of interest. In July 2015, an American dentist and part-time big game hunter went to Zimbabwe on a hunting expedition and shot a lion (*The Guardian*, 12 October 2015). The controversy that ensued was that this was not just any lion, it was a “famous lion”; part of an Oxford university research program. In defense of his penchant for hunting, the dentist made a statement to the press saying that he practices this sport “legally and responsibly”, by which he meant that big game hunting for profit organizations provided the legal resources. The big game commercial enterprises and the conservationists, although armed with different agendas, are utilizing the same language, but for different reasons. These commercial enterprises subscribe to a “consumptive utilisation of wildlife” model; their catchphrase being: “it pays it stays”. Conservationists recognize that hunting provides revenue that directly funds conservation. Social outrage as evidenced in the media used a totally different kind of language to object in the strongest terms. Photographs of the dentist posing with his wildlife kills were like non-linguistic signs intended to create an incendiary response. The ensuing emotional public outbursts all wanted, “justice for Cecil.”

According to PSDT, discourses involve political struggles to inscribe and partially fix the meaning of a term within a certain discursive chain to the exclusion of others. The alliance between commercial exploitation of



wildlife and conservation of wildlife shows that strategic word games can also illustrate the need for a similar outcome even if the agenda of discourses differ operationally. Derrida argued that any sign can be cited, put between quotation marks and in so doing, break free with every given context, creating new contexts in an unlimited manner (Panizza and Miorelli, 2013, p. 303).

As I read, analyzed, actively creating meaning in the way Barthes intended; I was also conscious that the debate is bourgeois. For the majority of people in southern Africa who are more concerned with struggles of life and limb, hunting, conservation and their itinerant discourses raging around them, are so removed from their experiences of socio-economic struggle. Engaging with wildlife is seen as a tourist activity, far removed from a job, if you have one, the demands of family life, and staying safe in crime-ridden societies. The injustice of killing a lion was a war of words taken up by a privileged other.

### **3.2.4 Truth and exclusion**

What is considered truth is not only in what a discourse permits, but also in what it disallows. Take the example of social science research. Religions have ideology and truth claims as their basis, but as Scheurich (1997, p. 34) points out, they are not “considered valid approaches to the generation of knowledge”. The quote by Caroline Myss which I used to lead into this discussion could be applied to postmodern theory just as it does to the epistemological focus of spiritual commentators of the modern era. (Caroline Myss has written extensively on the nature of intuitive knowledge and alternative ways of knowing.) Practitioners of discourse on alternative ways of knowing see the limitations of an exclusionary model of knowledge. But what remains currently unrecognized in social science may well become allowable with future generations of social science scholars. This is the open-endedness of PSDT.

### 3.2.5 Discourse as practice

*“a statue was a perfect way of articulating - the sense of alienation that black students feel on this campus,” he said. “The culture of the place feels white. The architecture is a European, Oxbridge architecture. Obviously, the language of instruction is English. The culture of what’s held up to be excellent universities and excellent science, and what we emulate and aspire to be, are the Ivy League universities and European universities.”*

***Extract from New York Times, ‘Students in South Africa protest slow pace of change’, September 8 2015***

This quote depicting university students’ struggle against symbols of colonialism and oppression on a university campus in South Africa, captures what PSDT refers to as ideational elements that were not previously thought of as belonging together in a relational ensemble (Panizza and Miorelli, 2013). The author of the quote is referring to (i) race conflict, (ii) painful memory in the form of colonial style buildings, (iii) language of instruction vs (iv) first language and the (v) ideals of higher education. All of these political statements are part of a discursive practice that enable both actors (the students) and audience (the reader) to experience and think about the world in certain ways.

When a writer/researcher brings in the perspective of discourse, she is inviting debate and/or controversy into a discourse. A discourse exists in relation to its anterior position to another discourse. By endorsing this ontological explanation, I am establishing a reason for offering discourse theory as an appropriate paradigm for my research objectives. My interest in the PSDT framework is that language, meaning and subjectivity unpeel the layers of status quo arrangements. The role language plays is a key

component of my research on SIE academics, but it is not the exclusive focus. Discursive practices, as developed by Foucault, refers to the operations of discourses and not only to linguistic practice (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014). My research intention is to explore a close study of discursive practice as central to the nature of lived experience. For example, the far-reaching effects of how globalization as discourse impacts lived experience on a micro level is directly related to the phenomenon of SIEs in modern times. Other forms of hegemonic rule, such as the dominant discourses that prevail in education in the UAE, are equally powerful in how subjects are controlled by power structures in society and politics. Bacchi and Bonham (2014) suggest that Foucault's main preoccupation was the practices that install hegemony. They explain that Foucault's interest was to explore how things that were stated stemmed from what was true in practice and hence accepted as knowledge. The interface of knowledge, educational practice and modernization can be seen in the effect of globalization on education.

### **3.2.6 A word on signifiers**

The research on expatriate academics show that while it is useful to identify generalizable categories to explain expatriate motivation for living and working in host locations, the shortcoming of depicting SIE faculty as a group with its own logic and functionality within the broader society of the host country, is to dismiss the range and variability of who these SIEs are. I see the term, "self-initiated expatriate" as a signifier which subsumes gender, nationality, marital status, age, work experience, non-native, or native English speaker. SIE may be seen as an "empty" signifier, i.e. a term with a broad or universal meaning (Townshend, 2003). Rather than view SIE faculty as a homogenous group, we need to problematize their agency (their individual choice to move to international locations to live and work).

I intend to explore such notions of agency and choice from the Foucauldian perspective that individuals are constituted by power relations (Crotty, 1998)

### **3.3 Neoliberalism**

*“Neoliberalism has become one of the boom concepts of our time”*

***Terry Flew (2010)***

Much of my study is about exploring discourses which confer subject status on individuals. It is about how dominant practices in society and the political space impacts and exerts power over subjects. It is about how subjects are produced in relation to the larger structures they inhabit. In as much as I seek to explore how power over subjects work, in a top-down process, I also want to know how power functions when subjects produce themselves within the social, economic and political milieu of their experience. In order to take these thought forms from seeds of inquiry to analysis of contemporary social, political and economic processes, I need a conceptual framework. To this end, I am going to join the myriad of academic voices exploring neo-liberalism to conceptualize the territory of work, institutional rationalities, and contemporary economic and political influences. Flew (2010) says that neo-liberalism is one of the great academic growth concepts of recent years. As I embark on this exploration I am aware of Gamble's criticism of the need to avoid 'a tendency to reify neoliberalism and to treat it as a phenomenon which manifests itself everywhere and in everything' (Gamble, 2001, p.134). However, I am a product of my time. As such, I am influenced by the ethos of an age that compels me to do the 'ethical work' as defined by Foucault (Binkley, 2009; Fridman, 2014), the micro-technologies that will self-produce to become an agent of one's own individualistic and economic design. I understand that the concept of 'ethical substance' stems from neo-liberal developments in political,

economic and social design. This is my socialization. In my role as researcher, I am obliged to contribute to knowledge and that knowledge is relative to the context of my time.

In his 1978-79 lectures at the College of France, Michel Foucault (1926-1984) presented the historical background to neo-liberalism. The series of lectures entitled "*The Birth of Biopolitics*" presented the ascendance of liberalism in western Europe through to the rise of neoliberalism. I have found Foucault's close analysis of this socio-political-economic unfolding very useful for my own understanding of how the precepts of neoliberalism came to be so prevalent in our contemporary world. In chapter 4 I go into some detail about the narrative orientation of my study. Story, as a category of knowledge, forms part of the research design. In the paragraphs to follow, I provide the story of neoliberalism. In this section I attempt to make sense of neoliberalism by describing its precursor, liberalism. My study is about economic and political power relations that exist within societies and in the world. These powerful forces have an originary basis. My research approach is to present the historical background of how contemporary history is shaped by these origins and how they affect ordinary people today.

Foucault's account of liberalism and neoliberalism traces the ideal of *homo oeconomicus*. In my study I wish to explore how this concept might be applied to SIE faculty. The liberal ideal perceived *homo oeconomicus* as a partner of exchange, but in the 18<sup>th</sup> century there is a shift to competition (Foucault and Senellart, 2004, p.118-121). Foucault explains that neoliberalism also has a theory of *homo oeconomicus*, "as an entrepreneur of himself" (Foucault and Senellart, 2004, p.226). This is not the only change, however, because with neoliberalism, human capital extends to other areas of social life, such as family life, education and health care (Foucault and Senellart, 2004, p.229-230). My study will show the contemporary effects of *homo oeconomicus* in an age of globalization.

On 7 March 1979 Foucault started his lecture, the eighth in the series describing his concept of governmentality. He analysed it as, “the way in which one conducts the conduct of men” (Foucault and Senellart, 2004, p. 186). I have been influenced by Foucault’s conceptualization of governmentality as “relations of power” (ibid.) to build my own analysis of how SIE faculty produce and reproduce themselves in all of their expatriate relocations. I wish to investigate how SIE faculty defined themselves as market actors through processes of their own governance, based on the socio-political-economic influences impacting them.

### **3.3.1 The rise of liberalism**

*“I believe, as Foucault did, that we won’t understand what Neoliberalism is without grasping what liberalism is”*

***Julian Reid (2017)***

Foucault’s interpretation of the history of state, government, power, the accumulation of wealth and the design of society in Europe from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards provides us with a logical progression of the rise of liberalism and the subsequent emergence of neo-liberal forms of government.

Governmental practice in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe revolved around the concept of reason of state (*Raison d’Etat*). The primary interest was the creation or maintenance of a wealthy state, based on the principle of mercantilism. Money, population growth and competition with foreign powers supported this principle. The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries saw the introduction of governmental reason. While the goals of *Raison d’Etat*, i.e. wealth creation, security, and policy still remain, this liberal development in governmental practice arises as achieving the goals of *Raison d’Etat* more effectively and not as an opposition to government. The question about which governmental practices are correct and which are erroneous were

determined by mechanisms of the market. New thinking concerning the market emerged alongside new thinking about public law. Public law and the exercise of power was questioned. French revolutionary thinkers promoted the rights of individuals and the limits of sovereign power.

Liberal approaches to law developed alongside freedom from the law throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The liberal approach sees freedom as derived from governmental practice. This includes a shared sense of what limits there need to be in a given situation. It also recognizes situations where government intervention can be made. The balance between liberalism, freedom and security is something for a new art of government to tackle. Liberal governments, according to Foucault, had to produce freedom. It also needed to protect collective interests against individual interests and prevent collective interests from encroaching on individual interests.

### **3.3.2 The new age of liberalism**

As a qualitative researcher my aim is to make sense of ideologies that produce the subjective experiences of SIE faculty. An historical perspective allows me to understand the world SIE faculty live in by looking at the foundations of neoliberalism. In this section, I describe the political, economic and historical developments that led to neoliberalism as we recognize it in our contemporary world. Foucault studied the rise of new forms of liberalism in Germany and America. *Ordoliberalism* developed in the 1940s and 50s as Germany tried to reconstruct the nation after WWII (Flew 2010, Brown 2015). German economists known as the Freiburg School, advocated a distinct move away from liberalism where market activities were spaces of freedom within an existing state. The aim was for Germany to become a state, “capable of creating, through its own programs and initiatives, the voluntaristic, entrepreneurial and self-responsible dispositions, upon which market forms depend.” (Binkley 2009, p.68). The

Freiberg School maintained that obstacles to liberal politics had provided the onset of Nazism. The *Ordoliberals* therefore proposed that the state should be under the supervision of the market. (Flew, 2010). In post-war Germany, the *Ordoliberals* were not suggesting that liberal economic policies find a space of freedom within the existing state. They were urging for a state that would create, “programs and initiatives, the voluntaristic, entrepreneurial and self-responsible dispositions, upon which market forms depend” (Binkley, 2009, p.68).

### **3.3.3 Neo-liberalism in America**

The concept of homo economicus, central to modern neoliberal ideology, is an important part of my thesis. Neoliberalism as we understand it today, governs states, economies and individuals. In the next section I explain how neoliberalism developed in America. This historical overview explains the link between economic need, philosophical perspective and the entrenchment of an ideology.

In the 1930s, government practice, in the form of the New Deal and welfare policies, expanded the role of government in economic and social life. Foucault contended that liberalism is the foundation of the state in America. The American War of Independence provided a different historical background to either *Raison d’Etat* or Nazi Germany (Flew, 2010). Liberalism in America is part and parcel of the American consciousness. Fridman (2014) attributes the idea of individualism to the growth of libertarianism to 20<sup>th</sup> century American thinkers (Milton Friedman, Ayn Rand and Fredrich Von Hayek) and the notion that individuals are endowed with the potential to do great things. In order for that potential to be realized they have to be guaranteed autonomy. Autonomy and choice are valued as the foundation of human achievement. The expansion of neo-liberal ideas are attributed to the economists of the Chicago School through their theory of



human capital and the notion that the individual, *homo œconomicus*, is an entrepreneur of himself.

### **3.3.4 The main tenets of governmentality**

Today neoliberal ideals are pervasive and underlie what we understand about how economic practices affect individual lives. In my efforts to present how SIE faculty are influenced by the way they interpret their work and life experiences, my research study needs to be a disciplined critique that includes historical developments that answer the question, how did we come to be where we are? In this section I explain the theory of governmentality which is attributed to the later work of Foucault. The notion of governmentality rests on the precepts of neo-liberal ideals as discussed earlier. It focuses on the making of market actors and it redefines concepts of power.

Foucault's theory of governmentality suggests that there are different forms of power. Governmentality stresses that market mechanism is a way of organizing all areas of social life. As Foucault saw it, governing includes both governing others (i.e. government) and governing oneself; which involves processes through which the self is modified by the person him or herself (Binkley 2007; 2009). Governmentality is maintained by the link between how one is governed by others (institutions, political policies, the labour market) and how one is urged to self-govern oneself by becoming an entrepreneur of oneself and thereby enhancing one's human capital. Individuals are exhorted, encouraged and coaxed into designing themselves as market actors.

Foucault (Foucault and Senellart, 2004, p.226) explained *homo œconomicus* as the individual being his own capital, his own producer and the source of his own earnings.

Governing through market mechanisms requires market actors. Market actors are in effect individuals who calculate, compete and invest in themselves. They become adept at fostering entrepreneurial and self-responsible capabilities (Fridman, 2014). This was how they multiplied their human capital. Such a concept of freedom is not contradictory to neo-liberal governments, but is part of governing. People are governed as free subjects and in turn they govern themselves as free (Binkley, 2007).

### **3.3.5 Subjection, subjectivity and subjectification**

Read (2009) states that it is not enough to oppose neo-liberalism as ideology, but we need to take seriously its effectiveness by looking at the way in which it has transformed work subjectivity and social relationships. Neo-liberalism is not just a manner of governing states or economies, but is tied to the government of the individual. Governmentality encourages subjects to see themselves as “companies of one” (Read, 2009). It is an effective strategy of subjectification. Workers are not encouraged to see themselves as workers who can mobilize and who can gain through solidarity. Instead they are individuals whose actions can be seen as investments in themselves. Binkley (2009, p.62) refers to the term “micro-technologies” for the methods individuals use to govern themselves. A study of how power functions needs to consider the varied ways in which individuals become, “more agentic, decisionistic [and] voluntaristic” (Binkley, 2009, p.62). Fridman (2014, p.106), citing Foucault, refers to the “ethical substance... the part of oneself that is determined as in need of ethical work’. Self-production, according to Foucault, involved subjection and subjectification. The term he used was *assujettissement*, which implied both passivity of the subject on the one hand, but on the other, involving autonomy and resistance of the one who is subjected (Binkley, 2009; Hayes, 2006). Neo-liberal governmentality brings with it a new production of subjectivity. It is this production of subjectivity that needs to be defined if

we are to gain a broader perspective of how power operates in neo-liberal relationships between power over and power from the bottom up.

### **3.3.6 The UAE context**

To understand how one can use the lens of a western economic theory (neoliberalism) in a presumably non-western context, (the UAE), one needs to understand the complex socio-political landscape. On the one hand, the local culture exerts a strong influence in all aspects of life. It is essential for expatriates coming to live and work in the Gulf, and in relation to this study, the UAE, to understand Islam and the principles which Emiratis uphold. I explain how local custom affects SIE faculty in chapter 2. Moreover, political authority exists solely in the hands of traditional rulers.

On the other hand, policy makers of the UAE have intrinsically linked development, and modernization with economic progress and education (The Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, 2008). Writers such as Kachru (1990), Pennycook (1994) and Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (1996) have stated that English has global significance as a symbol of modernization. English is the medium of instruction in the Arabian Gulf (Raddawi and Troudi, 2018). Education programs in the UAE are required to meet international standards (see chapter 2, page 28 ). The UAE offers many business opportunities (Troudi and Gail, 2017) and actively seeks investment from western corporates. The desire to “achieve higher global rankings in terms of global competitiveness” (The Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, 2008, p. 7) would suggest that market competition is as relevant in the UAE as it is in western nations (see page 25). The UAE is not averse to neoliberal forces of enterprise and free markets. With that comes employment structures favouring individual contracts. In chapter 2 I explain the significance of the expatriate workforce in the UAE and indeed the whole region of the Arabian Gulf. The globalising ethos of the UAE can

be regarded as connecting with neoliberal economic and political influences that shape TEFL and impact the lives of SIE faculty.

### **3.3.7 Governmentality and SIEs**

*“...the crossing of borders from one country to another, is an investment in human capital”*

***Jason Read (2009)***

My study looks at the world of work in the modern era as it pertains to SIE faculty. It also looks at the relationship between power and freedom to choose. Neoliberal governmentality is a perspective that sees individuals as subjects who calculate, compete and invest in themselves (Fridman, 2014, p.92). In the area of work and career, individuals are encouraged to consider their careers in terms of maximization of profit and to not depend on organizations, but to “shape their identities as enterprising selves” (Binkley, 2007, p.119). According to Doherty (2012), SIEs are people with a high degree of self-direction and a low degree of organizational commitment. Similarly, Chapman et al (2014, p.148), have stated that there is a “widespread sense” that instructors in the UAE are “essentially transient and easily replaceable”. In my study I would like to explore how findings such as these relate when viewed from the perspective of governmentality. Binkley (2007) and Cressida (2006) describe governmentality as a process where individuals are encouraged to work on themselves through instrumental imperatives that tell people what they ought to be and give them ways to become it. Referred to as the discourse of self-care, individuals are encouraged to become autonomous through forms of *assujettissement*, as described in section 3.3.5 of this chapter. Part of this self-care is the perception that being globally mobile is important to the personal development and career of SIEs (Lauring and Selmer, 2014).

Rodruiguez and Scurry, (2014, p.1049) have a similar view when they state that, “expatriation is seen as a source of internal and external capital, which helps to develop self-confidence, self-awareness, self-efficacy and market value through a combination of intellectual capital and credibility in the labour market”. I find a parallel with Foucault’s interest in how subjects fashion themselves not as opposed to coercive forms of subjectification, but in addition to it. Directing one’s work choices as SIEs do is a phenomenon of a new career (Rodruiguez and Scurry, 2014). A research perspective that will explore the tensions between personal career choices and the discursive processes through which subjectivity is formed (Fridman ,2014) is a perspective that asks questions of the phenomenon of self-governance as well as the phenomena of discourses that shape that work orientation.

Neo-liberalism presents us with an image of society made up of self-interested individuals. By considering governmentality as a theory that is applicable to extending our knowledge of SIEs, I will be asking if SIEs can be considered neoliberal subjects in the phenomenon of new career options. Furthermore, I will be inquiring if the concept of self-initiated expatriatism is a neoliberal project in the sense that it supplies practitioners with discourses (i.e. global work flows, lifestyle choices, monetary enrichment) and practices (short or long contracts; serial work locations) that seek to turn them into autonomous subjects responsible for their financial well-being and who value independence over anything else.

### **3.4 Summary**

This chapter has looked at the key characteristics of SIEs. Generally, an SIE can be defined as a person who is hired individually on a contractual basis and is not transferred overseas by a parent organization. Looking at the criteria which define expatriates, I have explored the findings of research studies which support and question these criteria. By so doing I have analysed current studies on the topic, having looked at SIEs broadly in the

literature on human resource management as well as education. As a particular group within the larger SIE population, SIE faculty, their motivations to expatriate, and their work experiences in the host country, cannot simply be subsumed under the broader banner of SIE. My critique of the current literature has offered lines of inquiry to direct my proposed study of SIE faculty as subjects who are produced in relation to globalization and discourses of economic rationality.

Troudi (2011) wrote that the theoretical or conceptual framework states the researcher's view of theories that inform [her] understanding of the constructs involved in the study. My study is an attempt to understand how a small group of expatriate teachers who have spent most of their careers working in host locations make sense of their workplace experiences. I study their stories of what motivated them initially and what has continued to motivate them to choose expatriation as a career choice.

Theoretically, this inquiry into self-initiated expatriate faculty draws on postmodern concepts of discourse. Discourses in education, discourses in educational institutions, socio-economic and socio-political discourses impact the lives of SIE faculty and position them subjectively in relation to these dominant discourses.

Another central concept is neoliberal governmentality (Foucault and Senellart, 2008; Binkley, 2009; Flew, 2010; Brady, 2014) which promotes the idea that individuals are subjects who invest in themselves in order to compete and thus increase their market capital. I have conceptualized neoliberalism as pivotal in the political and economic issues that impact SIE faculty. Neoliberalism, governmentality and discourse are the theoretical lenses I use to analyse the interview data. The methodology I use in this research is narrative.

In chapter 4 I explain how narrative inquiry, as a qualitative design type, allows for in-depth study of the experiences of individuals in general and SIE faculty in particular.

## Conclusion

The paradox of the researcher is the criticism brought to bear on how research is conducted. Scheurich and Young (1997) critique research as a social practice, arising out of a social history and culture that reinforce epistemological racism. They suggest that positivism, postpositivism, interpretivism, postmodernism/poststructuralism were developed by white influential philosophers in the west. To expand these theories in educational research is to exclude social histories, epistemologies that are typically not considered legitimate within mainstream research communities. Troudi (2011) says that a conceptual framework entails an elaboration on what has led the researcher to the selection of the framework. In selecting post-structural theory, in selecting Michel Foucault's theories of neo-liberalism, in selecting governmentality as an ideology, I am in a sense extending the research traditions of an educational orientation that according to Scheurich and Young (1997) have negative results for scholars who identify as black/mixed race/marginalized. These research traditions restrict possible epistemologies of other racial cultures. My researcher guilt is compounded by the realization that I am carrying forward the social history of a dominant white race. My educational views are influenced by the values and interests of western intellectualism. During the course of this intensive period of study and reflection, I have developed a predilection for many ideas. The first originating from Saussurean linguistics – how an individual is formed through language and culture. I first developed an interest in post-structural thought in the early 1990s. Derrida's concept of a sign being half "not there" and the other half "not that" (Crotty, 1998) resonates with me as deeply now as it did then. I approach my engagement with post-structural thinking like a friend I know well. I have made some new theoretical friends as I participate in "new career thinking" (Rodriguez and Scurry, 2014), precariously beholden to global work flows, but nevertheless, maintaining a need to understand its force. I take on

board that my “self” is nothing more than an effect of discourse. My researcher paradox, my researcher guilt is an axiomatic truth.



## CHAPTER 4 METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

*“Your research foundations are a skin, not a sweater to be changed  
everyday”  
(Grix, 2004)*

In this chapter on methodology I start from the basis that I have ethical, political and spiritual commitments and moreover, that I try to write out of these commitments. Anyone who has written a chapter on methodology, as I am about to do, will as a matter of course have encountered a vast number of labels. The methodology section of a thesis is insistent on labels. For someone who has stood by the dictum, ‘to label me is to limit me’ (Kierkegaard), I approach with a sense of trepidation the number of labels I am required to assign to my practice of research. This describes the starting point for my position in relation to the world and my position in it (Waring, 2012). It probably also qualifies my leaning towards interpretivism, which is the condition of understanding that there are multiple realities and the mind plays, “a central role [in] determining categories and shaping or constructing realities.” (Waring, 2012, p.15).

In this chapter I start with an explanation of the broad theoretical perspectives which guide my research. I proceed with a close look at my research paradigm where I admit to having a scattered ontological orientation. Following the philosophical underpinnings of my research project, I explain why narrative research is a suitable methodology for the study of SIE faculty. I offer some justification for embedding my two research questions in the methodology of narrative research. After a description of the research instrument, I proceed with an explanation of the sampling for this study. In the section on data collection, I reflect on how I interacted with both the theory and practice of qualitative interviewing. My

approach to transcription almost concludes this chapter, but not before I re-interpret my position as the interviewer asking the questions.

## 4.1 Theoretical perspectives

Explanations of interpretivism are resplendent with the word, 'meaning', or its catch-phrase, 'meaning-making'. According to Crotty (1998), constructivism refers to the meaning-making activity of the individual mind. Pring (2000, p. 98) states that researchers talk of the *subjective meanings* of those whom they are studying. Lather (1992, p. 91) asserts that the focus in interpretive research traditions is the importance of *meaning-making* in human experiencing. Barkhuizen (2011) in his narrative research says that *meaning-making* endures beyond the original telling of stories and continues when researchers analyze data and discuss interpretations with participants.

Another key concept is the verb phrase, 'make sense of'. Freeman (1995, p. 581) talks about his form of inquiry; a hermeneutic frame of qualitative research, that focused on how people, *make sense of* their environment and their experience". Norton Pierce (1995, p. 571) maintains that critical researchers are interested in the way individuals *make sense of* their own experience. Pring (2004, p. 46) describes the researcher working in the interpretive tradition who tries to *make sense of* the situation s/he finds him/herself in by constructing connections, meanings and frameworks through which experience is recorded. Barkhuizen (2011) in describing the narrative process talks of how participants *make sense of* their lived experience.

According to Grix (2004, p. 63), people who share similar academic perspectives tend to draw from similar world views and use similar terminology to describe the social world. Our academic perspectives originate from our beliefs, the "skin" that Grix (2004) refers to in the opening

quote to this chapter. To extend this metaphor further, I ask the reader to assume that my research skin is the same as other interpretivist researchers who believe that the individual cannot lay claim to a fixed identity. The person is one who is made up of the subject positions in discourses they occupy (Burr, 2003). Admittedly, much of my writing in this section of chapter 4 could be construed as me thinking aloud in my efforts to grow into my research skin.

In research, words are also acts. Those of us who do qualitative research do so with the work ethic that doing research is interaction between the researcher and the researched. Qualitative researchers want to explore subjective meaning in actors and to uncover how such actors make sense of experience. Moreover, how the researcher makes sense of the findings is part of the qualitative research process. The findings that arise out of the interaction requires consensus and negotiation, thereby precluding generalizations (Pring, 2000; Grix, 2004).

So what am I proclaiming when I label myself and my research *interpretivist*? Ontologically speaking, I need to revisit the positivist position that reality exists independent of our knowing of it. I am invoking the spirit of the original meaning of the word *paradigm*. The Greek word, *paradeigma*, meaning, *to show side by side*.

I subscribe to the view that how we conceive of things is embodied within language. This line of thinking presumably puts me with the constructivist camp of interpretivist researchers. However, I need to also concede that the way we acquire constructions is because there are certain features of reality (social world) which make them possible (Pring, 2000). We need some shared understandings. There is a real world independent of our construction. Grix (2004) refers to this interpretation of ontology as critical realism. I need to call into question any claim I have to identify with the constructivist label when I consider that what motivates my pursuit of social science research is to understand how subjects are produced in relation to

the larger structures they inhabit. This questioning stance presupposes a constructionist perspective that culture has a hold on us and shapes the way we see things (Crotty, 1998).

In chapter 3 I describe how the term SIEs came into being and what the consensus view of what makes someone an SIE is established in our repertoire of meaning. There is a need for some general understanding of the criteria of what it means to be an SIE. This general understanding is what I need to determine the sample for my qualitative research, as I will explain later in this chapter. Along with interpretivists and critical realists, I too adopt the 'double hermeneutic' (Grix ,2004; Cohen et al 2000, Crotty, 1998), described as social actors striving to interpret and operate in an already interpreted world. My study explores social and political discourses, the understanding of those discourses require a shared understanding of what they are. Globalization has an existence independent of my rational or emotional understanding of it. People find themselves living within these political and economic designs of society. According to Gee (1999) the discourses we represent and enact existed before we came on the scene and they will exist long after we make our exit. The make-up, or design of discourses exist independently. This make-up or design has built in causes to empower or disempower. The findings of any research, interpretivist or positivist, exist in time and place. There is hardly anything enduring about a piece of research. This is the hallmark of our traditions of knowledge-gathering. Regardless, the researcher's ontological and epistemological positions are the ones the researcher has endeared him or herself to. Of course these could well be conceptions of time and place also, reflecting a researcher's evolution, or quite literally that life, like research practice, is precisely that – practice.

## 4.2 How does a researcher decide on a research paradigm?

*“the storying of the self is constantly being constructed”*

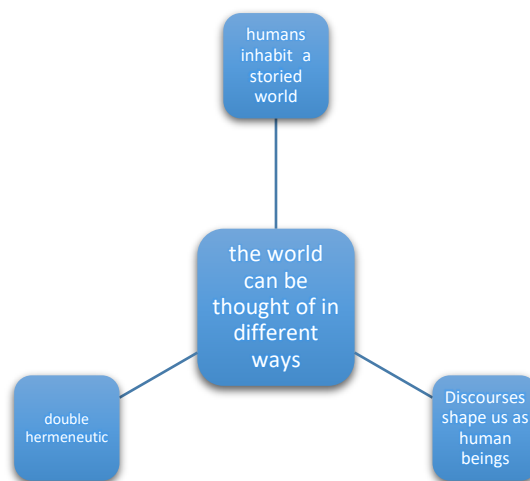
***Michalinos Zembylas (2003)***

Grix (2004) states that research starts from a person's view of the world which is shaped by the experiences she brings to the research process. Similarly, my interest in writing the narratives of SIE faculty is as a result of my own work-life experience as an SIE. I am one of a large number of ESL teachers and researchers (Clandinin and Connelly, 1996; Johnson 1999; Andrews et al, 2008, La Pointe, 2010; Barkhuizen, 2011; with an interest in story and narrative. My ontological perspective and my methodological interests have a collateral basis. I concur with Cronon (1992) who states that humans inhabit an endlessly storied world. Narrative is fundamental to the way we organize experience. The quote by Zembylas (2003) to introduce this section captures what I think of when I think of myself as a narrative researcher studying social science. As a scholar in the field of social science and the humanities, I want to know how humans who chose similar life and work paths like myself function, think, behave, and make choices as we all pivot around the same goal; which is to become better humans. My role as researcher is to witness the personal histories of that striving. My qualitative research needs to embody the meaning of the infinitive 'to understand'. Narrative research, I believe, will contextualize the social constructionist persuasion of my approach to qualitative research. However, my postmodern, fragmented researcher self recognizes a constructivist sense of reality - that the individual's way of making sense of the world is as valid and as worthy of respect as any other (Crotty, 1998). In as much as narrative research has the potential to help educators and researchers looking to learn more about teachers' personal experiences, it also helps participants in a study to understand topics that they need to process (Cresswell, 2012). As a narrative researcher, I feel that the

narrative succeeds when the interviewee can derive from the interview experience, “hidden feelings, forgotten motivations, and suppressed emotions” (Canagarajah, 2012, p. 261).

The diagram below presents my perspective of ontological thought. The diagram is a replica of the model Troudi (2010) uses to explain the relationship between theories in a theoretical framework. My post-structuralist orientation, is a unifying principle for the ethical, political and spiritual commitments I referred to at the start of the chapter. I tend to think that post-structuralism subverts a presumed essentialism of ontology. The best I can do is to offer the concept as an organizing principle; offering an interface, as it were, of a number of points of view.

### Ontological directions



## 4.3 Methodology: Narrative research

More than twenty years ago Connelly and Clandinin (1990) stated that there was a place in educational research for the stories of teachers' lives in and out of classrooms. The way that narrative research in education has developed ranges from autobiographical to life-history and a myriad other

diverse types of research activities that can be called narrative. What's important in all the diversity that exists is, "the voices of teachers and their ways of speaking, "which according to Elbaz-Luwisch (2007, p. 368) is, "central to the discourse on research on teaching." I approach narrative research from the standpoint that it offers practical, specific insights from SIE educators who are willing to tell their stories as they experienced them in actual educational institutions and socio-political contexts.

#### **4.3.1 Role of the narrative researcher**

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narratives allow researchers to provide an in-depth understanding of an individual's life and focus on the movement of people's feelings, reactions, their surroundings, retelling of past events and speculations about future prospects. It enables the researcher to gain a deep personal and contextual understanding of the experiences and decisions made in their lives. Zembylas' (2003, p.215) statement that "the storying of the self is constantly being constructed" has further poignancy. While this is true for anybody, for SIE teachers there is an even deeper, quite literal intent. ESL teachers who are SIEs, are a group in a state of flux. They periodically change their work location, their address, their lifestyle, thereby making choices to construct and re-construct their personal lives and their professional lives and all that that entails. Seen in this way, the narrative of the SIE, moves, shifts and is transformed in terms of time, place and action.

#### **4.3.2 Research Question 1**

My first research question explores the narrative idea of the storying of the individual through a number of expatriate shifts in geographic locations around the world. To reiterate a point I made in chapter 3, in my study on SIE faculty, I hope to gain greater insight into how they view the

consequences of their global work experiences. What is needed is a more specific explanation of what expatriate faculty life and career expectations are. To what extent, if at all, those expectations are met in the career choices they make and how they view the success, or lack of it, having made those choices. With this in mind I ask:

**How do self-initiated expatriate faculty frame their experience prior to expatriation? How does this framing impact their experience in host countries?**

Lather (2015) said that Foucault helps her to see the framings she uses to frame things. Given that Foucauldian thought underlies my research project, this statement prompted the framing of my first research question. My first research question is also prompted by a suggestion made by Doherty (2012) about the direction that future research on SIEs needs to take. Doherty (2012, p.457-458) says that there is a need to extend the research base on SIEs. She suggests that research should explore home and host country comparisons affecting the intention to become SIEs and the exploration of the factors that affect intended and actual repatriation behavior. To extend this call for the direction that SIE research needs to take, I am undertaking to explore how economic and socio-political discourses configure SIE faculty impressions of home and host countries.

### **4.3.3 Research Question 2**

In chapter 3 I observed that there is a shortcoming of depicting SIE academics who are currently in the UAE as a group with its own logic and functionality. To generalize was to dismiss the range and variability of who these SIEs are. The term, “self-initiated expatriate” subsumes gender, nationality, marital status, age, work experience, non-native, or native English speaker. Rather than view SIE academics as a homogenous group,



we need to problematize the perception of individual choice to move to international locations to live and work. Moreover, I maintain that experience is always mediated by social processes and discourses. In line with Foucault, I believe that individuals are constituted by power relations (Crotty,1998). My interest in expatriate teacher narratives is looking for those places where conflict between discourses on education, conflict between discourses on professionalism, conflict between discourses on economic power, and conflict between discourses on socio-political effects; cause teachers to bleed and then unwind themselves; negotiate their power and relinquish their idealism. With these premises in mind, my second research question explores:

**How have self-initiated expatriate faculty produced their agency  
within the socio-political milieux of their experience?**

That teachers have subject status in relation to educational discourses and institutional policy is illustrated in Connelly and Clandinin (1996). So too ***Elbaz-Luwisch*** (2007, p.16) states:

“teachers learn to censor their own stories and tell cover stories;  
thus teachers come to talk about their practice in the public forum in ways  
that accord with the official perspective...”

Educational systems as a discourse regulate how educators teach, how and what students learn, how directors, managers, supervisors, teachers, students within an educational system conduct themselves personally and professionally; what is to be allowed in a curriculum; what is banned from it. Stories by expat teachers can counter the stories of an educational system that legitimizes its own power and position.

#### **4.3.4 The role of research questions and research instrument**

The following sentences convey my self-styled interpretation of Mears' (2012) perspective of the role of research questions. Mears (2012, p. 171) says that the researcher first needs to clarify the question she wants the research to answer and the purpose she wants it to serve. Once she knows what she wants to learn and why, she can determine the method. To arrive at personal narratives of participants in this study, in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Wengraf (2001, p.17) uses the term "depth interviewing") were used to collect data. Cohen et al (2017) observe that the qualitative interview is about generating data. Interviewers and interviewees discuss their interpretations of the world and express how they regard situations from their point of view. Later in this chapter I give a more detailed explanation of my data collection methods.

#### **4.4 Sampling**

According to Edwards (2013), the answer to the question, *How many interviews are enough for qualitative research?* lies in the nature of the research. One needs to know what is the purpose of the research. One needs to determine whether the research is about finding commonalities or differences in the sample. Is the researcher looking for complexity? Practical issues such as time and available resources need to be considered. Similarly, Wengraf (2001, p.14) talks about "fitness for purpose" as a procedure for collecting and analysing semi-structured depth interviews. Both Wengraf (2001) and Edwards (2013) mention that the researcher needs to consider who the research is for. Besides the obvious answer that my research is intended to be read by the supervisors, examiners and ostensibly, the research community, I have less control over who the research is intended for and how they might receive it, and therefore, I feel that I have to focus on what the object of my research is. In

short, I am interested in advancing theory about how ESL educators who have spent several years living in host locations make sense of themselves and their experiences. Moreover, my methodological aim is to advance narrative research. This is what I offer. I turn to my community; the community of SIE faculty of which I am a part and I offer back to them their stories as I have witnessed through their retelling and our co-creation. In deciding the sample for this study I first consulted Cerdin and Selmer's (2014) criteria for defining SIE's, viz. that the decision to go abroad is made by the individual him or herself; they are regularly employed in the country they expatriate to; their stay in the host country is temporary and they have professional qualifications. The sample for my qualitative research is drawn from SIE faculty who currently live in the UAE, and who are employed in various tertiary institutions in different emirates. A further criterion for the sample is long-term experience. My sample is SIE faculty who have lived in two or more host countries and who could reflect on their TEFL careers from the perspective of more than one socio-political context. My particular aim in this research is to address a diverse sample. SIE faculty are women, men, married, single, English L1 speakers and English L2 speakers. According to Squire (2008, p. 48), experience-centred narrative researchers tend to use small numbers of interviewees. I based my research study by following this recognized practice; believing that one could build a convincing narrative through the detail provided in depth-interviewing. Preliminary details of the interviewees can be seen in the table below. In order to satisfy the specific needs of this research, purposive sampling is the most appropriate. According to Cohen et al (2017), researchers using this kind of sampling, select their participants based on the needs of the research, but the fact that the sample is selective means that it does not represent the wider population.

**Table 1: The Participants**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Years of ESL experience</b>	<b>Years as SIE faculty</b>	<b>ESL qualifications</b>
James	British	42	30	CELTA, DELTA (IH) Advanced Diploma in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (East Sussex) University, Masters in Applied Linguistics
Janet	British	27	27	BA, CELTA
Sami Ali	Palestinian-American	15+	15	PhD In Educational Leadership
Soyal	Palestinian-Jordanian	29	13	PhD in Applied Linguistics
Estee	South African	16	16	ESL in the Mainstream, CELTA, MA TESOL (Teacher Education)
Medo	Tunisian	18	15	DELTA, MSc in TESOL
Jack	British	34	34	CELTA, Licentiate Diploma in TESOL, MPhil in Teaching Modern Languages to Adults.
Demi	Ukrainian-Russian	20	20	Masters in TESL

## **4.5 Data collection**

### **4.5.1 Ethical considerations**

The first step before conducting interviews is to obtain the approval from Exeter's Graduate School of Education ethics committee (see Appendix 1). The next step is to issue consent forms (see Appendix 2) from the Graduate School of Education at the University of Exeter to the participants in the study. I secured interviews with each of the eight participants in the study. Participants were given an information sheet about the study. Therein were the details about the aims of the research. They were informed that their participation was voluntary, that their anonymity would be protected and they reserved the right to withdraw at any time. I emailed each one in turn, confirming dates and times of the interview and attaching the consent forms which outlined the purpose of the study.

A significant part of narrative research is collaboration (Cresswell, 2012). Participants themselves need to believe that they have been presented in a faithful way. According to Coulter, Michael and Poynor (2007), in asking participants to read, edit and collaborate on the construction of their own personal stories, "a researcher seeks to make their lives present" (2007, p. 108). Following this procedure is vital for the narrative to succeed. In keeping with my narrative agenda, I therefore asked interviewees to choose their own pseudonym for this study.

### **4.5.2 The semi-structured interview**

Mears (2012) states that effective interviewing depends on a well-planned interview guide to ensure that you cover the topics you want your participants to address. I felt that this was a good starting point that needed to be informed by the interview approach put forward by Tuckman, as stated

in Cohen et al (2017), that indirect questions are more likely to produce frank and open responses. Respondents can answer the questions in their own way and in their own words. The purpose of the interview is to capture the uniqueness of a particular participant. In addition to framing indirect questions, the interviewer needs to take into account the sequence of questions, starting with general questions and moving to more specific questions. Silverman (1993) contends that what is important in open-ended interviews is for the interviewer to recognize that what is a suitable sequence of questions for one respondent might be less suitable for another. Going into the interview situation, the structure for the interview was there to direct the conversation, but was mainly a framework that could be adapted, depending on the flow of conversation between the participant and myself as the narrative researcher. My aim was to conduct semi-structured interviews that would provide the necessary space to pursue participants' thoughts and ideas (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

*"All structures are unstable"*

***Eckhart Tolle***

While these are acceptable procedural advantages to have for interviewing as a research instrument, I was equally guided by Scheurich (1997) who said that it is important that we think about what occurs in the interview. In an interview there is no stable reality or meaning that can be represented. From a postmodern perspective, both the researcher and the interviewee have multiple intentions and desires that could be either conscious or unconscious. The 'interpretive moment' (Scheurich, 1997, p.73) occurs throughout the interview. The researcher brings baggage in the form of other related research, epistemological inclinations, conceptual schemes of story-telling, conceptions of race, class, gender and all of this interacts with the baggage that the interviewee brings. While we can accept that interviewing is central to narrative research, we need to equally accept and

indeed, categorically state, that the foundation of our qualitative research method is a structure that is essentially unstable.

#### 4.5.3 Piloting the semi-structured interview

According to Mears (2012) with either open-ended or semi-structured interview questions, one cannot be certain where the answer will lead. The need for piloting the interviews is really to determine when to use leading questions so as to obtain the information about the interviewee's experience that will help me to answer my research questions. I also needed to see which leading questions could be reframed so as not to put words into the interviewee's mouth (Cohen et al, 2017). I needed to assess, as Scheurich (1997) states, that what a question or answer means to me, the researcher, can mean something different to the interviewee. This fact, as I will explain later in this chapter, was validated in my interview experience. The pilot helped me to judge how many questions can reasonably be asked and answered within a time limit. As far as possible I wanted to conduct the interviews in neutral spaces, such as hotel lobbies, restaurants or my home. I managed to do this with seven of the eight participants. Conducting interviews away from work spaces, I thought, would encourage frank talk and openness in the participants.

The pilot interviews showed up my interviewer unease with probing potentially information-rich comments by interviewees. Take for example the following extract:

*\*Pilot 2: I get very frustrated (giggle) and I usually VOCALISE these frustrations to my colleagues who share the same frustrations and very often we're able to talk it through and come to a place of acceptance.*

*Interviewer: Ok we'll ... I'll bring you back to that point but not right now.*

Upon transcribing this pilot, I realized that I should have probed what Pilot 2's "frustrations" were. My pilot also showed that I was asking too many questions, which was not the point of the semi-structured in depth interview. I did not want to conduct fully-structured interviews, so I studied the transcripts of the pilot and eliminated some of the questions. As semi-structured interviews, they were not intended to be questionnaires, nor were they conversations. I share Wengraf's (2001) interest regarding semi-structured interviews, where the interviewee is asked to tell a story regarding part of their life experience. After reading Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), I was more conscious of picking on words the interviewee said and doing follow up questions. Later in this section I provide an example of this interview technique.

As part of my study and planning for interviewing, I immersed myself in how interviewing is conducted. First I read through interview schedules of other researchers who interviewed teachers (Zafar Khan, 2011, MacLeod, 2013, Aubrey, 2014). I listened to a great many interviews from diverse fields. For example, in the world of business and finance (*The Business Breakfast*), interviewers have to get at the heart of what they want to know quickly, so questions need to be concise and interviewers need to have done background checks on finance products. Interviewers perceive what listeners to the radio broadcast want to know about how cutting edge technologies impact the accumulation of revenue. I internalized this approach by being respectful of interviewees' time, since all of them agreed to meet with me in their free time. I requested 45 minutes to one hour from each interviewee. Preliminary questions for the information in the table (section 4.4) I asked in an email I sent out after the interviewees agreed on a date and time for the interview.



#### 4.5.4 Developing a narrative interview style

My experience with semi-structured qualitative interviewing was that I was constantly reviewing how I as the interviewer conducted the interview and how I might have done it differently (Wengraf 2001, p. 28). I followed the practice of transcribing and analyzing the interviews as soon as they happened. This helped me to gauge where interviewees tended to tell longer and more complex stories and where they were less likely to talk at length. Following Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), the purpose of each interview was to obtain descriptions of the interviewees' lived world.

Since narrative was a strong focus in the interview content, my questions to participants encouraged the recounting of memories. The following short extract is an example of my interview question, where I pick up on words the participant uses and then frame my narrative-style question.

*Interviewer: Ok. Can you give me a story that will help me to understand this culture shock that you're talking about?*

*Demi: It accumulated and there were many instances—interacting with people. Friends, classmates, teachers, grocery stores. Everything was different. The choice of products. So wide. Doughnuts or bagels, so many coffees. This cognitive pressure was so powerful at the beginning...*

As a narrative interviewer I paid attention to time, place, setting and description of role-players (Squire, p.2008). I also noted down the information I got and did not dwell on unpleasant personal histories. I followed this practice, but listened closely to the word choice interviewees selected and which words they emphasized when they described challenging situations. In chapter 5 I explain how I used discourse analysis in my data analysis. I found that because all of my interviewees spent their early years in countries and cultures so different to what I knew, I sometimes interrupted the flow of the narrative-telling for clarification. A noticeable feature about interviewing teachers who have several years of teaching

experience is that they can anticipate when they need to explain, so most of my interviewees would include in their narration what they meant by, for example, “Intifada”, “Soviet Juvenile Police”, and “did a runner”. I contextualize terms such as these in chapter 5.

## **4.6 Data Analysis**

In this section I explain how I analyzed the data. I start with how I organized each transcript, beginning with the steps I followed in transcribing. My transcribing method was a system of detailed transcription, theoretical memos, applying a three-column matrix for each interview and faithful commitment to a research diary. I explain each of these aspects of my data analysis in the following paragraphs. I then provide a description of the discourse analysis method I used to analyze the data.

### **4.6.1 Interviews and transcription**

*“Any decoding is also an encoding”*  
**(Wengraf 2001)**

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) suggest that interviewers are one of two kinds: they are either miners, or travelers. Therapeutic interviewers, for example, mine the deeper unconscious layers of experience. Knowledge is seen to be buried in the subject’s interior. It is fitting to refer to my epistemological approach to interviewing as the interviewer-traveler who has conversations with participants who, in the context of the study, are themselves travelers with stories to share. Knowledge construction is derived from a combination of interviewing and analysis. But before the researcher-interviewer gets too comfortable with her neat summation of this model of knowledge construction, such a researcher needs to be fully aware that, “any decoding is also an encoding” (Wengraf , 2001, p. 219). By keeping in mind that my purpose was to stay true to the experience of the interview, transcribed

words needed to reflect the reality of interviewees' speech. I chose not to edit out the speech habits, such as the ubiquitous *you know*, or the myriad *ums*. According to Gee (2011, p. 124), transcripts can be narrow or broad. Narrow transcripts are far more detailed than broad ones. During the Summer of Transcribing (May-August 2016), I surrendered to the need for elaborate transcript detail, mostly because I believed that had I edited and sanitized the scripts of interviewees, I would be making some judgement about how they were telling me their stories. I have not as yet come to a conclusion about whether this type of detail points to anything in particular, except that it exists, and therefore, it is.

Wengraf (2001, p.210) explains the need for theoretical memos. While transcribing, the researcher should make notes about subjective perceptions. These include notes on how the interviewer was feeling at different points in the flow of the interview, also what the informant may have been thinking. This echoes Scheurich (1997), who as I explained earlier, believes that researcher subjectivities are implicated in the interviewing. Theoretical memos assist with getting an answer to research questions. This move towards 'holism' (Wengraf, 2001, p. 209) is centred around the thought that an holistic sense of the research project is derived from the smaller parts of the data. By pausing regularly the researcher allows the mind and body to access the intellect, making space for sensing understandings of what the researcher wants to get at. I followed this recommendation by Wengraf (ibid), making notes in my research diary.

I also adapted a model of transcribing by combining Wengraf's (2001) representation of three types of knowledge gained through raw data with his representation of numbering by speaker turn units. I came up with a three column transcript matrix (see Appendix 3). The column labelled *Notes* comprises a collection of my thoughts about the questions I ask the interviewee and the way in which the interviewee responds. Wengraf (2001, p.11) refers to this (i.e. *Notes*) as '*Discourse*'. From the discourse in the

interview, I made inferences about knowledge the interviewee showed and the way she or he spoke about an event. By following an experience-centred approach to narrative, I also made inferences about the interviewee's perceptions of changing social and cultural contexts which she or he witnessed.

The column labelled '*Subjectivity*' helped me identify how the interviewee perceived his or her actions at a particular stage in his or her personal history. Because I was concerned with each interviewee as a unique person, I wanted to document his or her subjectivities. I found that when I looked for evidence in the data to support my inferences about the interviewees' subjectivity, I came closer to understanding "people's basic experience of the world" (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p. 29). By organizing the transcript in this way, I could make assumptions about how the interviewee chose to represent him or herself on the occasion of the interview (Wengraf 2001, p. 27). The semi-structured narrative interview explores the subjective world of the interviewee, so for an interviewer wanting to understand agency, or how an individual is positioned in discourses, it would be important to keep in mind that interviewees might be more concerned with presenting themselves through an official story about the subjective life-world. The category of discourse, or how the interviewee expresses him or herself, may explain other layers of complexity in addition to the official story.

I kept a research diary throughout the data collection stage of this thesis and noted how long each interview took to transcribe. Each interview was fully transcribed by me to produce a written text. The written texts and audio recording together constitute the materials for the discourse analysis and the subsequent cultivation of meaning.

## 4.7 Discourse Analysis

*“No set of research tools and no theory belongs to a single person...”*

**Gee, J P (1999)**

I have found Gee's (1999; 2011) theory and method of discourse analysis to be influential in expanding my own thinking of the role language plays in our lives, our fates and our transformation. His basic premise is that language allows us to do things beyond giving and getting information. I will expand upon his method in subsequent paragraphs, but to encapsulate this complex and in-depth analysis, there are three basic questions the language analyst asks of a piece of data. These are: what is the speaker saying? What is the speaker doing? What is the speaker being? Gee (2011) states that there are other ways to do discourse analysis. His approach is how to study language-in-use.

### 4.7.1 Seven areas of reality or building tasks

Gee's (2011, p.129) language-in-use method is ultimately a composite of 42 questions a language analyst can ask about one piece of data. An interview consisting of about 24 pages of transcription, will contain several pieces of data. The 42 questions are based on the assumption that there are seven building tasks to language which are: significance, activities (or practices), identity, relationships, social or political activities, connections and sign systems.

Whenever we speak or write we construct *significance*. The question the analyst needs to ask about this first building block of language, is how does this piece of language make certain things significant or not? Are events the speaker describes treated as significant or not? How does the speaker use words to make the event significant or not? Whenever we speak or write we support a socially recognized practice or an institutionally supported action. This is the second building block of language. In this

regard the analyst tries to identify what those *activities or practices* are. Whenever we speak or write, we use language to assert an *identity* and attribute identity to others. The question in relation to the third building block of language the analyst asks is what identity is a piece of language attributing to others and thereby, how does the speaker enact his/her identity? In addition to significance, practices and identity, another area of reality in language is *relationships*. Through language we suggest the kind of relationship we want with the listener or reader. The question for the analyst is to identify what kind of social relationship the speaker or writer is enacting. The fifth building block of language is *social or political activities*. Any use of language gains its meaning from social and political practices in society. Language can illuminate who gets helped and who does not in our societies and our world. The question for the language analyst is to ask what perspective is this piece of language communicating? For example, what does the speaker deem to be correct or appropriate or the opposite of that? *Connections* is the sixth building block. The language analyst asks how a piece of language connects or makes things relevant to each other, or alternatively, disconnects and makes them irrelevant. The seventh building block refers to *languages and varieties within language systems*. For example, there are different varieties of a language, there is technical language and everyday language. People make belief claims within these language systems.

#### **4.7.2 Building tasks**

Each of the seven building tasks have a further six areas or tools of inquiry (Gee 2011, p.128) where the analyst can ask questions related to each task. (See Appendix 4 for a full list of all the Questions).

Gee's methodology for discourse analysis is comprehensive and comes close to how we might understand what postmodernists mean when they put emphasis on fragmentation as a move away from totality and

completeness (Crotty, 1998, p.194). It helps to put back the complexity of the conscious and unconscious intentions that are active in the actual conversation between researcher and interviewee. Furthermore, it may be a response to Scheurich's (1997, p.63) critique that data analysis needs to be more than the mechanics of coding, with an equal emphasis on the "complex ambiguities of language, communication and interpretation."

Gee (1991, p. 2011) does not represent his theory and method of discourse in an illustration or diagram. I emailed him asking if there was a reason he did not do this (see Appendix 5 for Gee's reply to me). The quote I use to introduce this section shows that Gee (1999; 2011) himself believes that theories are there to be adapted for use by others, so as a student of discourse analysis, I found it helpful to use an image to facilitate my understanding of the seven building tasks and six tools of inquiry, giving the analyst 42 questions to ask. Below, I offer a visual representation of how I perceive what Gee (1999; 2011) means when he refers to tools of inquiry as "things that exist in the mind and in the world." (Gee, 2011, p. 60). As I see it, the speaker is both present and a backdrop to the building tasks of significance, practices, identity, relationships, politics, connections and sign systems. In a given piece of data, the tools of inquiry, i.e. situated meaning, social languages, figured worlds, intertextuality, discourses/Discourses and conversations – can be viewed as micro presentations present in the piece of data. Similarly, the micro images seen in the picture can be either complementary, or discordant, but together give rise to the composite mosaic (see below).

## Towards a visual representation of Gee's (2011) Building Tasks and Tools of Inquiry



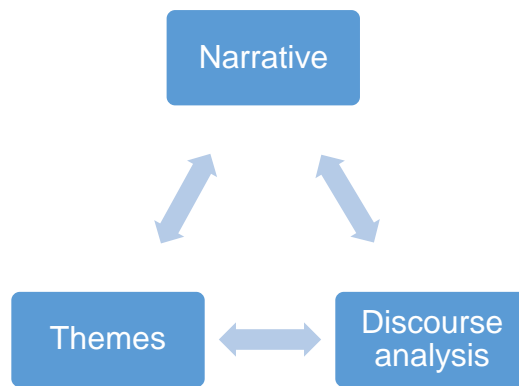
From the website of P J Laska, *Philosophers for Change*

With so many moving parts to a theory, I have summarized the building tasks and tools of inquiry (Gee 1999; 2011) in diagrammatic form to facilitate understanding (see Appendix 4). While this sense of fragmentation can be seen as the strength of postmodernism, in terms of the task at hand, asking and answering all 42 questions about one piece of data would result in voluminous data analysis. According to Gee (2011, p.122) real discourse analysis deals only with some of the questions. A discourse analysis argues that certain data supports a given theme. In the sample of the three column transcript (Appendix 3) I have indicated how the analyst can ask questions of a piece of data. I have used colours to code the building blocks. In all pieces of data I analyzed, I have considered different building tasks and looked for words and phrases to support my conclusions.



### 4.7.3 Themes and coding

Critiques against coding in qualitative research are based on the fact that breaking the data decontextualizes it (Punch, 2009). I position myself as a researcher working within the tradition of qualitative research, hence I recognize that segmenting and coding are an indispensable part of the research process (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996).



#### **Scheme for organizing qualitative data**

The way I approach themes in this study is that it gives me a way to think about power structures within social reality. These themes that I want to study impact and shape the lives of individuals in complex and unique ways. By adopting an experience-centred narrative approach, I approach stories of personal experience from the perspective of theme (Squire, 2008).

The life world interviews require “organization of information and data reduction” (Wiersma and Jurs, 2009), which then allows me to write the narratives of the participants in this study. So doing, I can guard against the charge of using decontextualized themes to arrive at answers to my research questions. How the individual uses language to convey particular meanings and experiences is the work of discourse analysis. Gee’s method (1999; 2011) helps me understand the form within the content.

## 4.8 Validity

*“...no piece of work can, or should, ask all possible questions, seek all possible sources of agreement, cover all the data...”*

**Gee (2011)**

As I prepare to write this section on validity I am both troubled and encouraged by the contentious signifiers of what constitutes validity in qualitative research. The academic prose of scholarship on literature often centres around phrases such as “threats to validity”, “minimize invalidity”, and “minimize the amount of bias” (Cohen et al, 2017). There are other high stakes concepts that accompany validity in research. These are trustworthiness and reliability. When researchers take on the voluminous task of finding a gap in scholarship, then proceed to collect and analyse data accordingly, we take on the mandate to comply with what Scheurich (1997, p.84) refers to as a “policing practice”. The troubling aspect for a researcher who wants to have her research passed as acceptable research is that there are a wide number of claims as to what constitutes validity in qualitative research. Cohen et al (2017) suggest that the amount of bias needs to be *minimized* (italics are mine) to achieve greater validity in interviews. Sources of bias include the attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer. There is also the issue of interviewer tendency; either that the interviewer sees the participant in her own image, or that the interviewer has preconceived notions and seeks support for them. Minimizing these sources of bias was not a feature of my data collection. Following Scheurich (1997) and Wengraf (2001), I brought conscious awareness of these possible biases into the three-column transcript (see Appendix 3) of this chapter).

Cohen et al (2017 p.105) state that threats to validity can only be “attenuated” and can never be “erased completely”. As a requirement for both quantitative and qualitative research, validity should be seen as a

degree rather than an absolute state (Cohen et al, 2017). Gee (1999, p.7) says that validity primarily consists in how our various tools of inquiry work together. A full discourse analysis would be to ask and answer 42 questions about any piece of data, but that would be laborious. However, it would be fair for a critic to raise a question that the analyst did not focus on. Gee (2011, p.122) calls this “unfinished background.” For me, this is where the value of post-modernism and issues of validity converge. Post-modernism throws the “unfinished background” wide open. A discourse analysis is an interpretation. The discourse analyst takes on the task of interpreting a text knowing that any analysis is open to criticism.

#### **4.9 Credibility and reliability**

According to Gibbs (2015), to ensure reliability in a study, the researcher needs to document meticulously. The researcher does this so that another researcher could replicate the data collection method that was used. Following Gibbs (2015), I have provided the research instrument (see Appendix 6). I have explained how I prepared a three-column transcript (Wengraf, 2001) for each of the participants. In addition, I have presented a summary of the discourse analysis method I used (Gee 1999; 2011). With respect to reliability in this research, narrative methodology is about co-constructing participants’ stories. In the second round of interviews I conducted, I read back part of the original interview transcript that needed points of clarification. Here was an occasion where interviewees could comment on how I had recorded what they stated. Interviewees were also given a typed summarized version of what they had shared in their interviews.

#### **4.10 Trustworthiness and transparency**

When researching experience-centred narratives, the researcher needs to consider what errors the interviewee may be making (Wengraf, 2001). How people can remember things differently was brought home to me when I interviewed a South African SIE who resigned from a permanent teaching position in her home country in the mid-1990s. At the time, state education departments were offering severance packages to permanent faculty. My interviewee stated that the reason for this was to make way for black student teachers who were under-represented in a new South African democracy. Being a teacher myself and witness to this development in South African education, I remember the justification for severance packages differently. At the time the South African government was courting a billion-dollar loan from the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and one of the stipulations of the loan was that government bodies needed to be restructured. That meant getting rid of a large number of government employees. I also remember the huge backlash against those who opted for the severance package, as it was feared that the result of so many experienced faculty leaving the profession would mean much larger classes and education quality would drop. Wengraf (2001) says that with semi-structured interviewing, the interviewer needs to be aware that while she is listening to the subjective world of the interviewee, what he or she says needs to be treated critically. It could be that the way an interviewee recounts a social-historical event is said in such a way that it puts them in a more agreeable light.

## Conclusion: Q and A

*“You do not leave behind your anxieties, your hopes, your blindspots, your prejudices, your class, race or gender, your location in global social structure, your age and historical positions, your emotions, your past and your sense of possible futures when you set up an interview, and nor does your interviewee...”*

**Wengraf (2001, pp. 4-5)**

My experience with qualitative interviewing in general and lived world interviews (Kvale and Brinkman 2009) in particular has shown me that questions we might imagine have a universal resonance can show up our vulnerabilities. By the time I had collected five interviews, I realized that I was asking an interview question that to my mind seemed directly related to answering my first research question and which was of high personal socio-historic consequence to me. The question was:

*“Did you have any fears relocating to \_\_\_\_\_ (name of place)?”*

Fear, it turns out, was not a factor in the thought processes of my interviewees, while it had been in mine. Wengraf (2001, p. 75) suggests that one's research purpose would determine one's research questions which would in turn influence the kind of interview questions one asks. So what I wanted to discover from my interviewees who were SIE faculty, just like me was what conditions of mind were operating when they expatriated themselves. I had gone into the interview situation thinking I am going to ask real questions and position myself in part as a therapeutic interviewer (Kvale and Brinkman 2009). Scheurich (1997) says that in an interview, what a question means to the researcher can mean something different to the interviewee. As it turned out, I was in fact asking the question I wanted the answer for, but the question was not relevant to the interviewees who, just like me, were SIE faculty.

What I have learned about the generalizing of questions is that questions that you would think apply, do not. During this time, I came across a talk by a well-known author speaking to her audience on creativity, and more specifically, how to re-discover one's creative impulses. She suggested that a question we should all ask ourselves is, "What do I love more than myself?" (Gilbert, 2014). The answer to that question then constitutes a coming home to oneself and subsequent feelings of wholeness and belonging. Now for the life of me, this question stumped me. The truth is that the question doesn't bring up any answer for me. A further truth is that I feel alienated for being unable to answer what appears to be a universal question about being human. When I analyzed the data for these interviews, I noticed where interviewees tended to give generic answers to questions. In some places they had been specific in their detail, in others they resorted to theorizing in general. As an interviewer, interviewing participants who were similar in age and experience to me, I have to wonder if this fact entered into the interview transaction. Questions can be unwittingly alienating. Just as I feel vulnerable to questions I cannot answer, were there moments when interviewees felt vulnerable in the substance of their answers? Scheurich (1997, p.70) brings this point home when he talks about interview situations as "asymmetries of power". The interview is drawn from the researcher's project, but it is the interviewee who is under the spotlight.

## CHAPTER 5 RESEARCH FINDINGS

### Introduction

*“...researcher as stranger”*

**Holliday (2002)**

One of the most liberating suggestions I found as I reflected on the data I collected for this research is by Holliday (2002) who suggests that the researcher needs to see the familiar as strange. He says that the researcher is required to see in a particular way, and not just describe what the data shows. One does this by standing aside from, and bracketing, a normal view of the world. Wengraf (2001) also suggests that the researcher asks *how else* (my emphasis) might she make sense of the data. The interview data for this study is a collection of life-world experiences from eight participants. Basically, this was a voluminous collection of stories of these individuals' experiences of societies, educational institutions, foreign cultures, geographic locations and climates they had experienced between the 1970s to the present. Throughout this research project I have positioned myself as an experience-centred narrative researcher (Squire, 2008) and as such, I collect data on the work-life experiences of SIE faculty. Since I myself am part of that fraternity, there is a level of shared understanding I have with the plots of the stories the interviewees related to me. My position therefore needed to make way for a more fractal subjectivity, hence I could call upon my outsider identity. My post-structural sense of self recognizes teacher, researcher, outsider and therefore I could shift the perspective of the data from “taken for granted” (Holliday, 2002, p.97). By re-positioning myself as outsider, I reflect on the ways in which the data is analysed and meaning is constructed and presented in this study. All of this is based on decisions taken by me; teacher, researcher, outsider. I feel supported in my stance by leaning on the perspective noted

by Foucault, as stated by Tamboukou (2008), that when we write a history of the present, it becomes necessary to distance ourselves. In essence, I believe that in reproducing the findings in this study, I am engaging with actors in history and writing a history of the present by calling upon the narrative abilities of the participants in this study. My interview questions, as such, were my efforts to pose practical questions about life, work, and crossing geographical boundaries.

Narrative research, I have learned, is equal parts distancing and honouring the participant. Earlier I explained the important role distance plays in this research. Now I balance that against the need to be, “sensitive to the uniqueness of the self” (Tamboukou, 2008, p. 111). I begin this chapter with summaries of participants’ life-world interviews. These summaries are based on narrative interviews where I obtained descriptions of the interviewees’ lived world with respect to their experiences as SIE faculty. Here I am implementing what Holliday (2002) suggests how researchers might reduce the sense of abstractedness if they focus on the academic style of third person detachment. The biographic detail in the interview data has been organized by chronology and situated in the research context of how SIEs are defined and understood (see chapter 3). Quotes from the interview data have been selected to illustrate the defining attribute or characteristic of the participant and turning points in their SIE experiences. By doing so I am electing to bring out the voice of the participant and balancing theory and reference to literature with personal experience (Holliday, 2002). Capital letters in quotes indicate words the participant emphasizes. Following from these summaries, I present themes in the data.



## 5.1 Summary of participants' life world interviews

In chapter 4 I explained in detail how I developed my qualitative interview to generate data. In this section I introduce the reader to the participants who represent voices of experience in the study of SIE faculty.

### 5.1.1 James

At the time of interview, James was 65. Originally from the UK, he has spent the last 30 years as an expatriate and has been in the United Arab Emirates since 2003.

James did not enjoy his first teaching experiences in a rural part of England. This prompted him to find teaching work elsewhere and eventually lead to an expatriate career which would take him to Europe, the Far East and the Middle East.

James describes how he got his first expatriate teaching job when he, *"...just turned up for an interview in London at the Danish Embassy (laughs) and within three weeks I was out in Denmark!"* This kind of action is noted in Cerdin and Selmer (2014) and Makkonen (2016). They say that SIEs are individuals who resign from their job and relocate abroad. Such a decision is entirely self-initiated, taken on by individuals who take charge of their careers without the support of an organization. James describes his three years in Denmark as a positive change from his earlier teaching job in the UK.

James followed this experience up with one, two or three-year expatriate relocations teaching in Europe (France, Germany, Sweden and Italy). James' work choices fit the description of SIEs being in charge of their international mobility, where to go, the length of their stay and their return to their home country (Doherty, 2013; Cerdin and Selmer, 2014, Makkonen, 2016). His work experience confirms the findings in established research.

This is how he perceived living and working in other countries: *“...in my mindset I’ve already got a three or two-year contract sorted. I’m looking around, ...”*

James’ perception of his role, his international relocations and his status are condensed in his undertaking that, *“...it’s not like you want a passport from this particular country. So as a result, you can do what you like.”*

Cerdin and Selmer (2014, p.1289)) state that SIEs “intend to repatriate one day”. After three years in Denmark James says, *“I came back. [I] Had other things going on as well because I’m a musician...”* James’ career history illustrates that he both self-expatriated and repatriated several times. His EFL career also includes periods of time working with other nationalities in the UK (south east Asians and Japanese). The episodes of expatriation followed by episodes of repatriation are characterized in these lines: *“...First you cycle around in your own area and then you go further afield. So I kept coming back to England...”*

Five years of teaching in a university in Japan were followed by 13 years (at the time of interview) in his current expatriate location of the UAE.

### **5.1.2 Janet**

Janet only spent the first 18 years of her life in her home country of the UK. Her lifeworld story begins in Egypt in the 1980s where she transitioned from student to EFL teacher. Her EFL career has given her opportunities to meet her husband in Cairo, move to Kuwait, then Lebanon where her eldest child was born, a brief teaching job in Amman, and then a 15-year stay in the UAE.

Janet’s expatriate incentives over the course of 27 years reflect what published research states about aging and international assignments (Selmer and Luring, 2010). Younger employees are said to be less worried about risks than older employees. Janet’s move to Egypt reflects

the research that young individuals are motivated by adventure and travel (Selmer and Luring, 2010). Janet seems to confirm this finding when she compared her home country to her life in Egypt, saying, “[*It was*] *VERY, very different. Which was EXCITING as a young adult*” (capitals indicates words that the interviewee emphasized).

The research also states that the importance attached to job security and physical security increased as people aged (Richardson and McKenna, 2002; Selmer and Luring, 2010). Janet and her husband moved to Beirut shortly after the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) and the country was still unstable. Her response to my question about whether that affected her was “*I took pretty much everything at face value*”. As she grew older, the responsibility of children and security prompted her to say that she would not simply move to another country quite so easily.

Janet was motivated to have more material security which was why she wanted to come to the UAE. Before she could take the job in the UAE, there was an interim period of a few months where she and her family moved to Amman and she worked in a private language school. Janet and her family spent 15 years in the UAE. She recalls arriving in the UAE in 2001 and experiencing a “*slow pace of life*”. She recounts her working life in the UAE as a mix of positive and challenging experiences. At the time of interviewing Janet, she was preparing to resign and repatriate to the UK.

### **5.1.3 Soyai**

Soyai tells her lifeworld stories with photographic recollection of dates, names and conversations. In our first interview, she seems to want to tell the story of her academic accomplishments, and understates her exposure to political, relationship, and work conflict. Soyai’s choice of language attributes an identity of how she wants to be seen. My first question was an inquiry into her early life. Her reply focusses on what she chooses to talk

about, which in this case was her work achievements. She uses the words, “*I have*” repeatedly: “*I have attended many conferences. I have presented papers...and I’ve also submitted papers for a variety of international...er...JOURNALS...*”. When I ask about what she remembers about occupation of the West Bank, Palestine, (1967-1993) while she was growing up, she does not offer any detail. Instead she says that, “*when someone’s country is occupied, you know, freedom is not there. So if you are not free, maybe everything you want to achieve, you can’t. So this is regarding my childhood.*” Soyal is far more descriptive about her academic accomplishments, starting with her love of reading as a student in Palestine. She was introduced to English as a second language at school and learned quickly while most of her peers struggled. From the time she got a scholarship to study in Jordan, Amman became her home for several years. She got married there and had a family. She remembers in detail her enthusiasm for the educational reforms the Jordanian ruler implemented. After a few years of high school teaching, she got job promotions which eventually saw her being in charge of English teaching and training. Soyal uses these words to describe herself during this time, “*I was a VIP amongst the REAL VIPs in Jordan.*” (capitals indicate words the subject emphasizes). Her motivation to undertake expatriation can be seen as “*escape from an undesirable work or personal situation at home*” (Doherty, 2013, p. 450). Soyal’s answer to my question about why she decided to expatriate was: “*...I decided to leave the country for two reasons, the first which I’d like to keep to myself because it’s very personal and the second....it had to do with my family life.*”. Push factors (individual hardships and economic reasons) as reasons to motivate are frequently expressed by SIEs (Froese, 2012).

She moved to the UAE in 2003. Soyal’s first year in the UAE saw her having to cope with a difficult work situation. She is reluctant to give any detail, saying, “*I don’t want to talk about my first boss here.*” I am uncertain whether this reluctance is about not exposing bad work situations for fear of reprisal or Soyal’s general disposition of not wanting to dwell on

challenging situations in her life. She concedes to one fact about this work situation, “...*salary-wise, it was not what I had expected.*” I ask her why she agreed to the terms of her employment. Her reply stands in contrast to the studies reported in Doherty (2013), that family considerations tend to be pull factors towards the home country. Soyal says that she could not return to Jordan because she had taken early retirement and in addition she had to consider her children: “...*my twins were here, so what could I have done? ...Nothing!*”

The studies in Doherty (2013) report that motivational factors to expatriate include a desire to seek out new and valuable life and work experiences. These studies do not report what happens after SIEs relocate to a new job in a new country. Soyal's experience shows how these motivations and subsequent action based on her motivation play out. Soyal's relocation and employment in Dubai in 2003 shows that she felt that she needed to find other employment because as she says, “*my salary was not high.*” What followed was a job as head of English language teaching at a high school. Soyal took this job, but continued to job hunt for a position in a university. After five months as head teacher, she found a job at a university and says, “*I LOVED it.*” She has been working at this Dubai-based university ever since and was promoted to assistant-professor. She is currently working on becoming an associate-professor.

#### **5.1.4 Sami Ali**

Sami Ali begins his lifeworld with the trauma of witnessing the Six Day War in Palestine (1967). He talks at length and in vivid detail about his home in Jerusalem, about being a refugee in Jordan and his family's move to the USA. His youth was spent struggling against being displaced from his home. His family had lost everything and as he says, “*The thing is that the war's effects were so shocking to me, so I was acting up and I didn't have DISCIPLINE because my parents, my family needed to start from scratch.*”

Sami Ali is equally adept in his two languages. He attributes his fluency in English to living in the United States. He realized his ability with languages when his family sent him back to Palestine, *“to learn some manners”*. He explains that as a youth he was too difficult for his parents to discipline. Back in Palestine, he helped his nieces and nephews with their English. He realized that he had *“a knack for it”* and went on to study teacher training both in Palestine and in the USA.

Sami Ali puts a lot of realism in how he tells the story of how he came to live and work in the UAE. He makes extensive use of direct speech to enact the actual dialogue to describe the conversations he had with the UAE official whom he met at a TESOL International Conference and who offered him a job in the UAE. Sami Ali did not expatriate for reasons of career enhancement. Doherty (2013) reports that expatriates appear to engage in a complex decision-making process. This fact is also true in Sami Ali's experience. He provides me with a lengthy description of the dialogue between him and his wife, quoting her reluctance to uproot their family and leave behind their lives in the USA. He states his own ambivalence to move as he tells me, *“I didn't want to leave my job back in the United States. I had a wonderful job – school administrator. In charge of a whole school. I was RESPECTED in the community.”* He also sought the counsel of family members living in the UAE. Sami Ali presents his decision to move as curiosity, similar to what the literature on SIEs describe as “an inner sense of adventure” (Doherty, 2013, p. 449). He moved to the UAE with his family for a year, taking a sabbatical from his permanent job in the USA. Doherty (2013) states that not enough research has been done on what changes expatriates experience in terms of status. Sami Ali's story shows that his initial decision to move was intended to be for one year, then return to the USA. He and his family enjoyed the experience of living in the UAE, so he decided to extend his sabbatical to two years. The result of Sami Ali's initial curiosity has been that at the time of interview, he and his family had been living in the UAE for 15 years. Makkonen (2016) states that SIEs often draw

their motivation from a personal interest in the location and host country culture. After living in the UAE for a year, this became the reason for staying longer than he intended. He tells me, *“I liked the culture, I liked the place...I was immediately respected.”*

### 5.1.5 Estee

Estee begins her lifeworld with her childhood in South Africa, born and raised near the coastal city of Durban. Estee's formative years were influenced by her exposure to discipline at school and in her home environment. She says of her high school principal, *“...he was very strong on discipline. And our school had a good reputation.”* Her mother's *“strict, but kind”* manner appears to have influenced her own relationship with students. She says that her students describe her in the same way.

At a young age she showed an aptitude for art and would have wanted to study art at university. However, teaching degrees were funded by the government in South Africa, so she became a teacher because that was the only way she could get a university education. She tells me, *“...we came from a WORKING class family ....and we didn't have money to pursue greater dreams, so TEACHING came with a bursary. So I think it wouldn't have been my first choice, you know, if I had money...”* Once at university Estee enrolled for art classes, thinking she would become an art teacher. However, the *“doped up, high on drugs.... very FLAMBOYANT”* art students were too much for Estee's sense of discipline and she felt she *“wouldn't fit in in a fine arts class”*. Other challenges affected her life as a student in the 1980s as the political struggle for a free and just South Africa threw all campuses into student boycotts. She left campus life to find a job, but returned when calm was restored and completed her Bachelor degree.

Her experience of teaching in government schools in South Africa was that it was *“a very RIGID system...you know.....inspections...and teachers had*

*to do things by the book. There was no room for flexibility.*” I ask her if she wanted to do another kind of job. Her reply was that despite school policies, she liked teaching because, *“the classroom was my kind of domain where I could take charge of what I was doing.”* After nearly 15 years as a high school English teacher, Estee left her job.

Cerdin and Selmer (2014) suggest four criteria to consider someone an SIE. The first has to do with whether the individual initiates expatriation him/herself. This was the case with Estee. With no other motivation, except *“to try out something different”*, she followed a suggestion from Polish people she met in her church. Her first EFL teaching job was in Poland in 2000. Another criterion suggested by Cerdin and Selmer (2014) is that SIEs need to have professional qualifications. The authors state that there are screening questions related to the four criteria as mentioned above. In the category of *skilled/professional qualifications* (Cerdin and Selmer, 2014, p. 1296), the question that determines if someone is an SIE is, *Do you have skilled/professional qualifications?* To be considered an SIE, the answer needs to be yes. In Estee’s case the answer might have been yes and no. While she did have a degree in education, her first EFL teaching experience was in her words, *“without any ESL qualifications”*. She was able to obtain a teaching job because she had a degree in teaching and years of teaching experience.

Estee’s further ESL teaching jobs was with the benefit of ESL qualifications. She went to Brunei in 2003. She states, *“By this time I had some kind of a TEFL qualification.”* Estee’s SIE work history shows a series of two or three year teaching assignments, followed by a year or two back in her home country. Estee’s pattern of expatriation followed by repatriation verifies the criterion of *intentions of a temporary stay* as stated in Cerdin and Selmer (2014). In Estee’s case, her temporary stays were both in her host country as well as her home country. After three years in Brunei she returned to South Africa and stayed for two years before going to Malaysia. By this time



she had obtained a CELTA qualification. With each new destination, Estee added to her qualifications. While Estee was in Brunei she studied ESL at a university in Australia.

### 5.1.6 Medo

When I ask Medo to tell me what he remembers about growing up in the south of Tunisia, he chooses to tell me about his yearning as a child:

*“I wanted to have a good library at home. For economic reasons, I was not able to have this library. Books was expensive for me.”* Our whole interview is flagged with themes, quotes and characters from novels he has read over his lifetime. According to him, he got to learn English quite late in his life. Growing up with Arabic and French, he was introduced to English in high school. An influential teacher fostered his love of learning and reading English and he furthered his interest once he entered university.

Medo lists a number of the courses he studied, pointing out that learning how to teach was not one of them. His only exposure to teaching methodology was on a summer course in the UK.

At 23 he started teaching in a high school. He refers to this as *“a bad experience”* because he had to teach teenagers and had *“no clue of how to deal with them.”* He emphasizes that he liked teaching even though, at the time, he was *“a teacher without tools”*. Medo seems to have made strides in his chosen profession. I ask him what about teaching he enjoys. He tells me, *“I’m a good actor, you know, in the classroom. I like joking with the students. I like involving them...”*

Still only in his 20s, Medo came to teach in the UAE in search of a much better salary. This would confirm Gardner’s (1995, p. 293) statement that in the UAE, Ministry of Education officials searched “far and wide in other Arab nations” to recruit a teaching force. Medo says that by comparison to Egypt and Sudan, Tunisian teachers were better paid, *“so you don’t have a*

*lot of Tunisians coming and leaving the country.*” His reason for coming to the UAE seems to be two-fold. He tells me, *“it’s the packages”*, an admission that seems to verify Gardner’s (1995, p. 294) assertion that the UAE’s “willingness to pay premium salaries could be used to good advantage”. Medo tells me that coming to the UAE was *“also to experience something new, you know...”* His reasons to expatriate seem to be in line with similar findings on motivation in SIE literature. In Selmer and Lauring’s (2010, p. 172) demographic study on SIE academics, they found that younger people (according to the sample, that was 32.19 years) were more motivated by adventure, career and money than older academics. Medo tells me that he thought he would stay in the UAE for five years then leave. More than 18 years later (at the time of interview) he still lives in Abu Dhabi. Doherty (2013) suggests that more research into how the initial motivations of SIEs play out is needed. In Medo’s case, his reasons for staying as long as he has appear to be a complex mix of personal and professional realities, however, he still has intentions of repatriating.

Medo tells me about his difficult first year teaching boys in a high school. He endured the pranks they played on him. His experiences seem to have helped him develop strategies to his advantage. His perception of challenging classroom situations is that, *“they [students] DON’T want you to survive the situation. Basically, they want you to lose, you know, lose face...”* Medo believes that because he speaks Arabic and understands Arab culture, he has an advantage which he uses to good effect in his current job at a university. Over the course of almost two decades in the UAE, Medo has built his career to the point where (at the time of interview) he was leading a very large professional body and looking toward developing himself in educational leadership.

### 5.1.7 Demi

Demi's earliest childhood memory, growing up in Kiev, Ukraine is doing impersonations to entertain people. He loved the attention and took this attribute into his teens. His edgy performances got him into trouble with Soviet authorities. When he tells me that he has taken up boxing even though others tell him he is too old, I notice that he still prefers to push boundaries. His reluctance to conform in his youth saw him doing poorly at high school, because, *"the content of secondary education back then in the Ukraine was very boring and stale and didn't inspire anything in me."* Fuelled by a desire to change his circumstances, he developed an interest in foreign languages. Demi is very keen to apply intellectual theories to his life experiences. He is knowledgeable about Vygotsky's (Daniels, 2005) learning theories, Soviet politics and Marxist economic theory. Not only is he an admirer of Vygotsky's educational theory, he is also a practitioner. He has analyzed how he himself learned and mastered English as a foreign language and moreover, how he would like to, given the chance, approach teaching in his own profession.

He got a scholarship to study in the USA where he acquired a Masters degree. He returned to work in the Ukraine, but lasted only two months because he says, *"Every day was a slap on the face. Too many students, no appreciation and low salary."* With a wife and young child to support, this situation prompted him to look for meaningful employment in other countries. Demi displays the global mobility orientation referred to in Luring and Selmer (2014). The authors say that to have a global mobility orientation means that people are open to move physically and see this as beneficial for personal development. Initially, Demi experienced the move to Taiwan as beneficial.

The Luring and Selmer (2014) study found that there is no relation between a global mobility orientation and job satisfaction. My interview with

Demi contradicts this finding, however, because when I ask him why he left Taiwan, his reply reflects issues with job satisfaction.

He arrived in the UAE with his family in 2008 and lives in Abu Dhabi. When I ask him why he chose to come to the UAE, he says, *“this is the best package so far for language teachers.”* Demi contemplates life at a deep level, so when I compare what he says about his current level of job satisfaction, it contrasts quite significantly with Luring and Selmer’s (2014) study regarding global mobility orientation. The authors state that SIEs are more globally mobile and see this mobility as important to their personal development and their career. Demi categorically states, *“I don’t feel like a teacher here. I feel like a proctor, like an invigilator. Nothing else. Like an entertainer.”* The reason he feels this way he says is because, *“I don’t believe in the material I’m using.”* He feels that he has the professional know-how to do effective teaching, but he is contained by an educational system that does not allow for different teaching methods. He gives me a very detailed explanation of how he would take charge of students’ learning were he given the chance.

#### **5.1.8 Jack**

Jack begins his lived world in the 1970s when he left his home in the UK and went to the West Bank, Palestine as a volunteer teacher. He uses the phrase, *“I loved ....”* very regularly in describing this time in his life, whether he was talking about travel, teaching, or experiencing different cultures. At this stage Jack did not have any professional qualifications. According to Cerdin and Selmer (2014), having professional qualifications is a distinguishing characteristic of SIEs. Nevertheless, Jack did opt to live and teach in a foreign country out of his own free will. After a few years of being a volunteer teacher, teaching Palestinian refugees, he returned to the UK to do a degree. When he completed his studying, he returned to teach in the Gaza Strip in the mid-1980s during the period of *Intifada*. He gives me

an eye-witness account of what day-to-day life was like under Israeli occupation. I notice, though, that Jack recounts his experiences with a sense of neutrality. For example, when he recounts what he saw happening, he says, “...*sometimes soldiers would come in and youths would run and throw stones at the soldiers, and they would fire teargas and everyone would scatter.*” There is no acrimony, nor taking sides in his retelling of the historical events he witnessed. At this stage of our interview, I am uncertain if this neutrality which I am observing is an example of “cultural intelligence” which Luring and Selmer (2014) say distinguishes successful expatriates. At this time Jack taught in a United Nations refugee camp. He was sent to Jordan to work with Palestinian refugees

Next he found a full-time job in Greece. I have no need to prompt him about how he felt about teaching in these places. He tells me, “*I was very drawn to the eastern Mediterranean culture...I fell in love with the cuisine, the rhythm of the seasons, I just felt like I belonged there.*” Jack’s description fits in with Luring and Selmer’s (2014, p. 524) definition of what it means to have a global mindset. They suggest that an expatriate who has a global mindset has cultural intelligence and “attend[s] to the external environment.”

Jack credits the CELTA for advancing his teaching methods in contrast to “other teachers who were just backpackers off the street. However, the low salary he received in Greece prompted him to return to the UK to teach in a language school. He refers to this as, “... *the best teaching job I’ve ever had*”.

Jack was in his 30s when he came to a decision, “*I needed a decent salary. So I got a job in the UAE.*” This is where Jack’s stories of love for his profession as a teacher take a turn. He proceeds to tell me impassioned accounts of enduring extremely challenging work conditions for four years. As a witness to Jack’s life-world, I am torn between retaining the integrity of our interviews and the word limit of this thesis. One story, leads to another,

then another. There is still a feeling of outrage at the indignity of some of his experiences.

The next four expatriate moves in Jack's life were restorative. After four years of living and working in very difficult conditions, Jack found a job with the British Council in Damascus. This move was a very positive move for him as it was well-run and well-resourced. He left at the end of his contract after two years, expecting to return, because he enjoyed living there. He accepted a job, also with the British Council in Yemen, but because of the unstable political situation, he only stayed six months. Jack eventually returned to Damascus for a year. This was again a happy move for him and a period where he enjoyed teaching and living in Syria. *"I was happily teaching in Damascus,"* he tells me, but a year later he took a job offer in the UAE. He tells me that the reason he decided to return to the UAE was that he was in his 40s and he felt that he needed to boost his financial situation. A teaching job in the UAE would be able to provide him with the kind of income that other language institutions could not match. He stayed in the UAE for more than 14 years.

## **5.2 Analysis of life-world interviews**

Cerdin and Selmer (2014, p. 1282) suggest that the fact that there are more SIEs than organizational expatriates is the reason that SIEs need to be clearly defined and researched more thoroughly. In the summaries I have provided I have endeavoured to respond to this suggestion by illustrating that the way SIE faculty are theorized does not necessarily concur with the lived world experiences of SIE faculty in this study. Luring and Selmer (2013, p. 523) pitch their study from the perspective of what characteristics SIEs have that make them "function well despite having to operate in countries that are foreign to them". The SIEs I interviewed would all provide classroom examples of how they "function well," given that they have years of teaching experience and professional teaching qualifications. What I

intend to show is that this is an incomplete picture of the SIE experience as it pertains to faculty. The quality of adaptability which Luring and Selmer (2013, p. 524) suggest is a feature of “global mobility orientation” needs to be viewed as acts of compliance. My findings show that SIE faculty function within, and are subjected to, the educational and institutional discourses where they live. In some cases SIE faculty negotiate the need to be employed with the functions required for their continued employment. According to Davies (1991), from the perspective of a poststructuralist sense of agency, a subject is positioned within particular discourses. From this perspective, a subject’s chosen line of action needs to be seen in terms of the fact that the subject is subjectively constituted within the discourse to want that line of action. The data for this research corroborates this understanding.

Cerdin and Selmer (2014) state that being able to identify who moves becomes important for understanding the global human resource market. In these summaries, I have described both the motivations and expatriate experiences of men and women ESL educators from diverse backgrounds, cultures and personal histories. My decisions about how to represent the data were influenced by five factors. These were feedback from my supervisor, qualitative research theory (Wengraf, 2001; Punch 2009; Wiersma and Jurs , 2009), narrative research (Clandinin and Connelly 1990; Andrews et al, 2008), SIE research, and drawing on my reading of qualitative research studies conducted by other researchers who used narrative methodology (Johnston, 1999, Zembylas, 2003; LaPointe ,2010; Trejo Guzman 2010).

### **5.2.1 Relationship between biography, told story, and themes in the literature**

In the biographic details described earlier, I provide information about interviewees’ early lives, their childhood growing up in their birth land, the

family and societal influences in their youth and their teaching experiences before they become expatriates. Although the research purpose is about interviewees' lives as expatriate English language teachers, I begin the interview by asking them about their early lives. Understanding the cultural background, geographic location and personal relationships gave me insight into the influences that would eventually lead them to choose teaching as a career. Although all eight interviewees are formally trained teachers of English, four of them would not have chosen this career path in their early years before mature adulthood. These subjectivities would change with other personal and societal influences. By the time I ask them the question, *"Take me back to when you first started in education. What were your thoughts about being a teacher?"*, we have already covered a lot of background information and I have an understanding of how they positioned themselves in relation to the society. By learning how to do narrative interviewing, I was able to co-construct narratives with the interviewees, which meant that the themes I coded were not just disjointed sections of interview data, but I could make connections between their early influences and how they came to enter the teaching profession. This chapter aims to describe themes that emerged from the data and their links to the stories collected in the interviews. As I stated in chapter 4, applying thematic content analysis helps me to think about broad influences in social reality that impact the lived experiences of SIE faculty. In the table below, the column entitled *Narrative theme* lists themes drawn from across the data. *Narrative sources* (column 2) are the participants whose stories fit the theme. I have indicated where there is data overlap for both research questions. The third column, titled, *Examples of Told Story*, are illustrations of stories I selected to represent those themes. The fourth column, *Literature sources*, connects all the data of the first three columns to the arguments put forward in the literature review.



**Table 2: Findings for Research Question 1**

<b>Narrative theme</b>	<b>Narrative sources</b>	<b>Examples of Told story</b>	<b>Literature sources</b>
Discursive constructs of home country in relation to foreign location	Stories of leaving  Stories of escape	"I wanted to go abroad"  "I had to look for a better place and maybe a different country"	Reasons why SIEs move from home country (Chapter 3)
Discursive constructs of host location	Stories of job satisfaction  Stories of discontent (RQ1, RQ2)	"People close ranks and help each other"  "My profession is degraded"	Global mobility orientation, new career thinking (Chapter 3)  Individuals are constituted by power relations (chapter 3)
Impact of expatriate locations (RQ1, RQ2)	Stories of remuneration  Told stories of teaching in home countries (RQ1, RQ2)	"I heard about the packages"  "The jobs are overseas"	

### **5.3 Discourse of home country in relation to foreign location**

To answer my first research question: How do SIE faculty frame their experience prior to expatriation? How does this framing impact their experience in host countries? I needed to understand something about the interviewee's personal, social, cultural and political influences in their home country. I will first describe motivations to expatriate by examining two broad categories in this area, viz SIE faculty who did not report stress factors as their reason to leave and SIE faculty who reported stressful situations which prompted their decisions. The first narrative theme focusses on interviewees' motivations to leave their home country. I refer to this as "discursive constructs", following the tradition of experience-centred narrative which privileges speech as closest to personal experience (Squire, 2008). In this respect I am also reiterating a point I made in chapter 4, from Scheurich (1997) who argued that data analysis needs to be more than a process of coding and that there needs to be a focus on language and communication. The told story (Wengraf, 2001) as I will illustrate, is situated within the context of family, cultural, political or societal influences. The findings are presented in these paragraphs and this is then followed by a discussion (chapter 6) to explore possible meanings and interpretations.

#### **5.3.1 SIE faculty who did not object to work/life situation in home country**

Researchers who have studied expatriate motivations for leaving their home country have suggested that the need for adventure and exploration topped the list (Chapman et al (2014); Selmer and Luring (2010); Richardson and McKenna (2002).) Four of the eight participants in my study, could be considered "adventure seekers" (Chapman et al, 2014). Based on the interview data, I refer to these four participants as SIE faculty who did not object to their work/life situation in their home country, but were

nevertheless open to new experiences. In relating the stories below, I will illustrate how this sense of adventure was embodied by the interviewees. For each of the stories in this section, adventure-seeking represents an initial stage in experiences of the expatriate life world. I use this to introduce SIE faculty subjectivity, and then relate it to the continuing development and transformation of the subject.

### **5.3.1.1 Stories of leaving**

Each interviewee who told a story of leaving his/her home country was at a different age and stage of their lives. The stories in this section are interwoven with stories of various other influences. For example, Jack's story of how he came to teach in his first expatriate location, the West Bank in Palestine, is part of other stories of his upbringing, his family and the cultural trend in 1970s Britain. Estee's story is part of other stories of her church membership and how it operated in that community. Janet's story of being a student in Egypt preceded any thought of a teaching career. Medo's story illustrates the influence of Gulf countries offering more attractive salaries than was available in the home countries of SIE faculty.

### **5.3.1.2 Jack**

Being young and straight out of high school, responding to the ethos of his time, Jack said:

*"I wanted to go abroad. I'm talking about the late 70s. It was very popular then for young people to go abroad. And both my siblings had gone to Morocco as Quakers because we were brought up as Quakers. And as such you're encouraged to do voluntary work abroad..."*

Jack would expatriate a total of nine times in his teaching career, however, each overseas relocation would represent his changing subjectivity. His adventure-seeking mindset changed from: "... *bumming around the world, just having a good time. Never had any money and really enjoyed it...*" to

increasingly becoming more concerned with his material well-being. The sentiment he expresses here, “...now I was getting into my 30s and I had about 30 pounds in the bank. And I wasn’t saving anything, ” would influence his subsequent expatriate moves, reflecting a change from adventure-seeker to “comfort-seeker” (Chapman et al, 2014), a moniker which in Jack’s case reflected the need to move abroad for economic reasons.

### 5.3.1.3 Estee

The data of my study shows that adventure-seekers, irrespective of their age, transition into comfort-seekers or “root-seekers” (Chapman et al, 2014). In the story below, Estee recalls the situations before she left for her first expatriate teaching job.

*“Then how I got involved in EFL and ESL teaching was, I had visitors from Poland come over to my church. And they needed accommodation. So the congregation was asked to accommodate these visitors. And I accommodated about three of them in my flat. So one of my guests suggested that I come to Poland because she was a member of the Protestant church in Poland and they had er... a language school which was run by the ministry of the church. So... I did”*

Estee’s SIE experience began with this thought: “I thought it would be something different and let me TRY this out.” At the time she had resigned from her high school teaching job which lasted more than a decade. The fact that she was not “paid a high salary like a regular teacher” was less important than the opportunity to be in a different environment and travel. Estee would make a further 5 expatriate moves. Over the course of her relocations, Estee would improve her ESL qualifications to get hired in institutions like the Centre for British Teachers, Brunei (CfBT) and British Council, Kuala Lumpur.

#### 5.3.1.4 Sami Ali

Sami Ali became an “adventure-seeker” at a mature age. He had a good job and his family was established in the USA. In this extract he recalls a conversation with his wife that illustrates the family dilemma between staying and leaving to experience something new.

*“I talked to my wife and she said, you know,” ...We’re comfortable here. We have our home. We have our kids in school. We have everything that we want. Why would we move?”*

When he expatriated with his family in the early 2000s, he put certain safeguards in place. He says:

*“I thought, you know, might as well try UAE. So I took a sabbatical for one year”.* He transitioned from adventure-seeker to root-seeker. According to Chapman et al (2014), root seekers are not driven by professional advancement. In this respect, Sami Ali affirms:

*“I was offered jobs for MORE money, but I didn’t wanna leave. I’m comfortable. I’m happy with what I’m doing.”*

Moreover, root-seekers, like Sami Ali who have a similar cultural background, enjoy the benefit of living in an Arab culture (Chapman et al, 2014). Sami Ali expresses his concern over his children acquiring western values, growing up in the United States:

*“...they started having, you know... thinking about ... the idea of boyfriend, girlfriend. And I’m a Muslim ... person. And I thought I don’t want that for my kids.”*

#### 5.3.1.5 Janet

Janet was already an expatriate as a student learning Arabic in Egypt. In this extract she positions herself as foreigner with the advantage of living

and working in Egyptian society, but with the freedom to distance herself from the political situation.

*“...being a foreigner in Egypt meant that I was living IN Egyptian society, but I wasn’t part of it, which perhaps gave me a little bit more freedom to enjoy life, because I wasn’t so deeply invested in it as my Egyptian friends, for example. The political situation was not so wonderful at the time, but then as an expatriate, that didn’t really affect me very much. I earned my salary which was low by British standards...”*

When she married an Egyptian national, she and her husband relocated to Kuwait, Lebanon and Amman. Her response to living in a volatile city like Beirut in the 1990s was:

*“But then I was YOUNG and didn’t really think too much about possible security risks or anything like that. And you know, Beirut’s quite exciting.”*

With family responsibilities, the adventure-spirit gave way to comfort-seeking. Her statement echoes the published research (Chapman et al, 2014) on this category of expatriates:

*“because my husband is not from the same country that I am so at least one of us will need to be an expat. And I understand that this is quite common here where families are partners... have different home backgrounds. They often choose to live in a third country”*

### **5.3.1.6 Medo**

At age 28 Medo arrived in the UAE to work as a high school teacher in a largely undeveloped part of the country. He positions himself as wanting to expatriate for two reasons, the first being economic-motivation, the second, to satisfy the need for adventure (*“something new”*). With respect to his economic-motivation, he explains what he stood to earn, *“At the time it was er...two salaries, you know”*. According to Selmer and Luring (2010), the need for adventure, advancing career prospects, and family considerations are followed by financial gain as the fourth largest reason why academics

expatriate. The authors say that marriage and family responsibilities were the main reason for wanting to make and save a large amount of money. In Medo's case, he was single when he arrived and wanted to stay for five years only: *"I thought it's 5 years, you know then I will leave.* However, decisions to marry, and then to study further, made him stay in the UAE.

*"So with these emergent issues, you know, I had you know to keep a decent package, you know. To help me continue my studies, fulfil my other social duties in ....and responsibilities"*

### **5.3.1.7 Adventure-seeking as discourse about expatriates**

By replicating these stories of leaving the home country, I wish to show that such stories are part of other stories which make up the subjectivity of SIE faculty in this study. It may be noted that the SIE faculty in this study do not themselves use the term "adventure-seeking". The term "adventure-seeker" could arguably apply, but a narrative context provides the reader with a view of the interviewee who is positioned within other social realities as well. They are discursively represented in the discourses which influenced this turning point (Wengraf, 2001) in their life world. Various discourses about family (Jack, Sami Ali), socio-cultural influences (Estee's involvement with her church), and socio-political influences (Janet, Medo) inform the agency of adventure-seeking. These stories are representative of how global developments which occasion the demand for ELT teachers in various parts of the world have become part of socio-political and socio-cultural developments in the various societies represented by the interviewees' countries of origin. Adventure-seeking as a trait of SIE faculty is made possible by neoliberal application of contemporary work practices. Contrary to what other authors (Richardson and Mckenna, 2002; Chapman et al, 2014) suggest that adventure-seeking is an internal psychological state, I am offering an interpretation from a social constructionist perspective (Burr, 2003) that it is not temperament or attitude, but part of the discursive culture within which globalization and its concomitant, global

flows is made possible. Neilsen (2009) says that English teachers have been working around the world in increasing numbers for the last half century. In the next section I talk about those interviewees who became SIE faculty for reasons other than what has been referred to as adventure-seeking.

### **5.3.2 SIE faculty who had difficulty in their work/life situation**

In this section I study the discourse of interviewees at a life turning point (Denzin, 1989), producing the stories of the life-world factors that led them to choose expatriation as a viable option to improve their life circumstances. Participants who could be regarded as redemption-seekers (Chapman et al, 2014) when they first left their homelands also transitioned to become comfort-seekers.

#### **5.3.2.1 Stories of escape**

Part of narrative research from the experience-centred perspective is that narratives are jointly told between researcher and interviewee (Squire, 2008). In the stories which follow, I present the interpersonal contexts of the told stories, along with the broader social, political and cultural contexts. According to Squire (2008), experience-centred narratives address turning points in life, but may not necessarily involve narrative structure. Soyul's story described below is an example of a turning point in her life, but her reticence to elaborate with details of events, makes it nonetheless meaningful. James' account of his first teaching experiences is also told without a structure, in the Labovian sense, i.e. abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result and coda, (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). Demi's story, by contrast did contain narrative structure. In this section, interviewees left their homelands for the UAE (Soyul), Taiwan (Demi), and Denmark (James). The subtheme for this section (stories of



escape) is taken from Selmer and Lauring (2010, 170) and Richardson and McKenna (2002, p. 71) who refer to “life change/escape” from negative working situations, prompting the decision to expatriate.

### **5.3.2.2 Soyal**

Soyal made the decision to move with two of her young children for reasons she did not disclose:

*“I decided to leave the country for two reasons, the first which I’d like to keep to myself because it’s very personal.”*

She follows this with her other reason for leaving Amman, saying,

*“My salary was limited, you see, so to improve my FINANCIAL situation, I had to look for a better place and maybe a different country.”*

Soyal’s story illustrates that in one individual, reasons for leaving can be a complex mix of factors. The next interviewee’s story shows that motivational patterns to expatriate arise from diverse personal and socio-political factors.

### **5.3.2.3 Demi**

Demi chose to move to Taiwan with his wife and child because his work situation in the Ukraine became untenable. His situation which he describes below is noted by Froese (2012) as push factors; i.e. economic recessions and individual hardships that move people towards overseas work. and look for a fresh start in a foreign location.

*“... back in the 90s after Ukraine was trying to get back to the knees after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the economy was terrible. Ruins. So I worked for a very little wage. My wife wasn’t very happy, so she started frantically looking for a job outside. And the job she found was in Taiwan, where I ended up working.”*

#### 5.3.2.4 James

Somewhere between adventure-seeker and redemption-seeker is James who left the UK because he did not like his work situation. James recalls his early teaching years in the UK as: “...it was a very difficult set-up and I was working in a high school there.” His dissatisfaction was partly due to the administration of the high school he taught in. He says, “ I found the whole thing too oppressive, really. It was very controlling in every way.” James’ impression of the actual teaching he had to do at the time left him exasperated. He says, “I was actually teaching reading skills...and stuff like this and basic numeracy to kids who couldn’t sit down. It was a very challenging thing. ” He tells me, “ I actually, consciously wanted to get out,” so with this in mind, he secured a job in Denmark and stayed in his first expatriate location for three years.

#### 5.3.3 Reviewing motivation factors

Analyzing themes in this section of the findings, what Doherty (2013) refers to as micro-level capabilities, needs to be considered in the light of Selmer and Lauring’s (2010) observation that the original reasons to expatriate may become less clear to respondents. The authors refer to the impact of time as having an effect on participants’ accounts of their initial reasons to expatriate. The experience-centred narrative researcher needs to be aware of the multiple factors of context when recreating narratives. The multi-faceted nature of context could imply, for one, variability of time, but it also extends to a larger narrative universe. Ricoeur thought of narratives as told between writer, reader, speaker and hearer (Polkinghorne, 1988, Squire, 2008). Doherty (2013), who is concerned with taking research on SIEs forward, and therefore one such reader/hearer, recognizes that exploring the experiences and exposing the characteristics of SIEs as individuals, while important, needs to be extended. She suggests that SIE contribution

at a collective level is necessary for understanding the impact of SIEs in the workplace. In the next section, I analyze SIE faculty experiences in their various international relocations. My interpretation of the data that follows represents my developing understanding of my first research question, but also extends to my awareness of my second research question: How have SIE faculty produced their agency within the socio-political milieux of their experience?

## **5.4 Discursive constructs of host location**

*“For me, the unpacking of certain words gets you to a particular place”*

***Dominique Christina (2015)***

In considering what SIE faculty reported about the educational institutions they worked in, I was mindful of Tamboukou’s (2008) observation that their experiences should be considered discursive constructs, rather than indisputable points of reference. In applying this principle to the data, I am focused on my epistemological aim of unpacking how a qualitative researcher gets to the places of meaning-making. In chapter 4 I explored this as a hallmark of qualitative research and therefore, its place in my thesis. The phrasing of thematic headings helps to make sense of the data (Holliday, 2002). I also use Gee’s (1991, 2011) tools of analysis to verify the validity of how I arrived at themes in the data. I use the details of speech to present what the interviewee deemed relevant, outrageous, proper, or improper.

### **5.4.1 Stories of job satisfaction**

Five of the eight participants spoke about having some positive experiences of job satisfaction in a foreign country, which then filtered through to their general enjoyment of their expatriate relocation. Jack, Janet, Estee, Soyal

and James had several between them, but I could not record all here, so I have taken a selection of stories that captured themes of atmosphere, classroom dynamics, being appreciated as a teacher, and student attitude.

#### **5.4.1.1 Learning atmosphere as *social good***

Gee's (1991, 2011) tools for discourse analysis (see chapter 4) can help to unpack memory of the times and settings that came up in the interviews. The data showed that interviewees remembered these positive experiences in terms of their own figured worlds, i.e. a simplified world that captures what the speaker sees as normal. Social goods are anything some people in a society want and value (Gee 2011, p. 19). The stories I reproduce here suggest that the interviewees displayed a confidence in their ESL teaching and that their contributions might have been seen by their students and administrations as a social good.

#### **5.4.1.2 Teaching in conflict zones**

Both Janet and Jack reported having had enjoyable experiences despite having lived in conflict zones. I asked Jack if he found it difficult teaching in a place with socio-political unrest. This was his response:

*“Not at all!. Because I was a volunteer, it was a volunteer spirit – that’s probably what I liked. People close ranks and help each other...spirit of comederie. As I said at the University of Bethlehem, it’s Catholic owned. It’s run and it’s under the administration of the Vatican, so it’s a very ... umm.. very good atmosphere. Prayerful, even.”*

**(Jack)**

Here one may note the situated meanings (see chapter 4) of the words, “*volunteer spirit*”, “*spirit of comederie*”, “*very good atmosphere*”, “*Prayerful*” – word choices which build relevance in the way Jack is adding to the significance (Gee, 2011) of his opening statement, “*Not at all!*”

In this extract Janet gives an impression of Beirut shortly after the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990).

*“...So there was still a lot of troubles simmering under the surface, but at least superficially you could have a class of 20 and you’d have people from 20 different backgrounds, who at least for the two hours in the classroom, just... got on with it. We found the Lebanese VERY, very welcoming to us as outsiders.”*

**(Janet)**

Janet’s recollection of the figured world (Gee, 2011) which was Beirut in the early 1990’s is contained in the phrase *“still a lot of troubles simmering under the surface”*, balancing that with the situated meaning of her being able to teach English regardless of the conflict because the 20 students, *“just got on with it.”*

#### **5.4.1.3 Using *Intertextuality* to illustrate professional knowledge and practice**

When SIE faculty related stories of their relationships with students, they make connections between their interpretation of pedagogical knowledge through classroom practice and student interaction. In the extracts below, participants allude to other types of text or *intertextuality* (Gee, 2011, p. 43). Intertextual referents such as “virtual exchange project”, “authentic presentation” (Soyal), *“I sat them next to someone they didn’t have a language in common with, except English” (Jack), “some TEFLy activity where they had to discuss something and then, you know,... agree (Janet)* illustrate classroom practices employed by SIE faculty to deliver lesson content. Through these intertextual referents, SIE faculty position themselves as both knowledgeable about ESL pedagogy and effective in implementing them.

Some participants told stories of how they were adept at creating meaningful learning experiences for students in their ESL classrooms. Soyal told a story of classroom interaction that attributed an identity to

herself as teacher and presented a figured world about the relationship between herself and students:

*“...We call it virtual exchange project, and it is conducted in collaboration with a university in Japan and another in Colombia. Yeah, it’s very interesting, so I could achieve something. What is more? Maybe I shouldn’t show off, but maybe I’m reflecting on reality. Come see me in my communications class. I can talk about what makes a authentic presentation for AGES. And my students LOVE that. And their feedback is REALLY, really, really high. Highly satisfactory.”*

**(Soyal)**

In the following extracts, SIE faculty talk about implementing ESL classroom activities that would illustrate who they are as ESL teachers and what they do successfully in that role. Jack recalls a time when he taught at a language school in England and Janet recalls a memory of a classroom in Beirut.

*“And we always had a lot of Italians, Spanish and French, but with Poles, Japanese, Arabs, etc, etc... so I sat them next to someone they didn’t have a language in common with, except English. So they were forced to speak in English. Moreover, the whole country was their classroom. So sometimes I would take them into the streets during class time and go shopping together and use that as a classroom. And I said every shop in this high street, and every pub and park is your classroom. And they loved that and they appreciated that and we did that...”*

**(Jack)**

*One of the students joked ... there was some TEFL activity where they had to discuss something and then you know agree. So after the 5 minutes or 10 minutes or whatever it was I said...“Everybody come to an agreement.” And one student looked at me and laughed and he said, “\*Janet, we’re Lebanese. You put two Lebanese in a room together and you’ll have three opinions!”*

**Janet** (\*pseudonym)

#### 5.4.1.4 Attributing and building *identities* of appreciation

The previous section provided evidence for how SIE faculty in this study felt appreciated. In this section I elaborate on other stories of appreciation by analyzing textual data that focusses on *identity* and *connections*, which Gee (2011, p.23-24) suggests are building tasks that are evident in our discourse. The following stories are examples of what SIE faculty appreciated about interacting with people in their host locations. Gee (2011) suggests that when we speak we connect things by making them relevant to each other. James makes his treatment in Denmark relevant by comparing it to his early experience in his home country and Estee makes her experience with students in Poland relevant by contrasting them with students from other nationalities. The stories reconstructed here show how SIE faculty attribute an identity to others and implicitly reflect their identities in their role as ESL teacher. They illustrate what they do in interactive situations and the feedback they appreciate as a result of their efforts.

James and Estee use the building tasks of identity (Gee, 2011) to make assessments of others with whom they interacted. Participants use language to describe positive interactions to get recognized in their roles as SIE faculty. James' positive TEFL experiences in overseas locations had a lot to do with being appreciated for his work effort. When James' compared the treatment he received in Denmark to what he had experienced in his home country, he uses the two building tasks of politics and connections (Gee, 2011). In this extract he responds to my question to describe his experience in his first expatriate location.

*“Oh it was fantastic!... I used to go to all the schools in this particular county. And I'd spend a month here and a month there, and it was wonderful just to see the different styles and different teachers. And they actually treated me like a VIP, which is not what I used to get back home, I mean. Back home it was, you're doing this class because no one else wants to do it. Whereas here it was, “Would you mind if we did this?” or, “Could you do this project with us?” It was just wonderful there.”*  
**(James)**

The building task of politics is used when a speaker wants to state what s/he thinks is right or not. By enacting the conversation, "*Would you mind if we did this?*" James is making the treatment he received disconnected from how he was treated in the UK, "*you're doing this class because no one else wants to do it*". The situated meanings of, "*...it was fantastic!*" and "*just wonderful there*" adds to the significance of how he viewed his expatriate experience compared to his home experience.

In this extract, Estee talks about students she taught in Poland, her first expatriate relocation:

*"The good thing was that the students that I taught were motivated students. Most of them were adults. I had a teenagers group, that was just one group. What was different for me was the students... the teenagers. They were high school students. They were so knowledgeable about the world. It was unlike ... listening to American teenagers speak... they only know America. These students knew about Africa and Europe and the rest of the world. You could have a conversation with them."*

**(Estee)**

The situated meanings of "*motivated students,*" "*so knowledgeable about the world*" attributes an identity to the students and extends the significance of her opening phrase, "*The good thing was*". In this collection of stories, I have prioritized experience through showing the links between details of language and SIE faculty subjectivities. Burr (2003) suggests that positions in discourse provide us with the content of our subjectivities. In all these stories, teaching discourse is the focus. Interviewees described their practices of teaching in the context of foreign locations. The sense of enjoyment and satisfaction expressed in these experiences is told from their subject position in the discourse of teaching. Luring and Selmer (2014) similarly found that contentment is derived from the characteristics of that particular job. This statistical study measured job satisfaction amongst SIE academics as part of global mobility orientation. While this study assessed job satisfaction by a 4-item scale in their quantitative study, the discourse analysis approach I used to illustrate the stories show that satisfaction is



ties up with professional knowledge and the ability to carry out their educational aims in a manner that the interviewee considers proficient. In this section I have shown how SIE faculty claim participation within discourse which frames their experience. In the next section I look at the contexts in which SIE faculty resist the discourses which frame their experience.

### **5.5 Stories of discontent: competing discourses, subject status, and alienation**

The following collection of stories can be described as pictures that are painted of events or people and a particular way of representing them in a certain light (Burr, 2003). As data, they are interviewee stories of practices in educational institutions, professional obligations and teacher responsibilities. An aspect of my research inquiry is looking at how long-term SIE faculty frame their manifold experiences (research question one). I invite the reader to remember that post-structural perspective recognizes that alternative versions of events and people are potentially available through discourse. My intention is to show how discourse reflects the experience of interviewees in this recreation of experience-centred narratives. The stories reconstructed here are about SIE faculty not being represented in the discourses they enact, but for which they are “carriers”, nevertheless (Gee, 2011, p.35). The selection represented covers areas such as teacher-student interaction, educational discourses, institutional discourses, and teacher obligations.

**Table 3: Findings for Research Question 2**

<b>Narrative theme</b>	<b>Narrative sources</b>	<b>Examples of Told story</b>	<b>Literature sources</b>
Competing Discourses	Stories of discontent (RQ1)  Stories of remuneration	"My profession is degraded"  "I heard about the packages in the Gulf"	Individuals are constituted by power relations (Chapter 3: 4)  New career thinking (Chapter 3)
Impact of expatriate locations	Stories of teaching in home countries  Stories of extended temporary stay	"The jobs are overseas"  "I can find better job opportunities"	Neoliberal governmentality  Homo economicus (Chapter 3)
Unexpected findings	Stories of personal history traversing socio-political change	"Vietnamese refugees"  "After democracy"	Small stories within big stories
Unexpected findings	Stories of othering	"It was special in those days" "he took advantage of that"	

### **5.5.1 Competing discourses: Institutional discourses, educational discourses and professional discourses**

Foucault used the term “discourse” to refer to specific knowledge forms, such as psychiatric discourse or clinical discourse (Tamboukou, 2008; Holstein and Gubrium, 2000). Essentially, a discourse is a differentiated practice with rules and reasons provided for those rules which are to be adhered to. When interviewees described or spoke of their experiences in the classroom, there was an aspect of taken for grantedness, a level of understanding between interviewee and interviewer about the place of these discourses. This could be because, as a teacher myself, I would understand the “material domain” (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014, p.190) of educational practices and institutional practices. In the sections which follow, I analyze the effects of these regulated practices that are to be found in the day-to-day operations of teaching ESL in language schools and institutions.

#### **5.5.1.2 Subject status: Perspectives on *politics* in educational institutions**

*“Any case where we talk, write, or act in ways that give or withhold social goods or say or imply how social goods are or should be distributed is political...”*

**(Gee, 2011, p. 210)**

This quote by Gee (2011) explains how I discursively identify the way in which SIE faculty use language to describe the educational, professional and institutional practices they encountered and what they project how they ought to have been practiced. In the discourse analysis I focus on how interviewees interpret social goods as integrally related to the discourses I investigate. I have selected extracts from data that describe the aspect of discourse, and its perceived implication for the distribution of social goods. In addition, I refer to other building tasks like identity (Demi), relationship (Soyal), significance (Sami Ali), connections (Janet) that are all linked to social goods. In each of the stories

of discontent, *figured worlds*, are amplified, because they represent what interviewees consider appropriate attitudes and viewpoints. In this section of the findings I am putting the focus on discursive practices in education and discursive practices operating in institutions that entrench what Bacchi and Bonham (2014, p.191) refer to as “particular singular realities”. The comments put forward by the interviewees indicate that discursive practices that reinforce these singular realities they deal with in their daily working lives as ESL teachers disenfranchise them from educational and institutional organs of power.

In the next extract, the term, identity is seen as one of the 7 building tasks of language, used when a speaker takes on a certain role, or that speaker uses spoken language in such a way as to attribute an identity on others. In the following extract, Demi expresses dissatisfaction regarding his colleagues. The listener/reader notes the *situated meanings* (Gee 1991; 2011) of these words, ‘*most teachers*’, ‘*they*’, ‘*them*’. He is using language to take on an *identity* (ibid) that is other than what he observed from colleagues he distances himself from:

*“There was no promise of development. And our status was very low. **Most teachers** in Taiwan went there because **the** were single and it’s close to Thailand. **Most of them** were single men, wanted to go to Thailand for pleasure. So that was the only reason. **Many of them** were not even teachers. And I had my Masters degree. So I felt that my profession is degraded.”*  
(Demi)

In this extract, Demi situates education discourse in a classroom practice in Taiwan:

*“But there were too many of them. I had a class of 70 people. There was no interaction. Very little interaction. Teachers spoke into the microphone to keep students awake. Because the classroom was big and half of them were asleep. So the microphone or the amplifier would wake them up. But the quality of education in Taiwan is terrible.”*

His comment, “*But*” and *terrible*” indicates to the listener that he takes on the *identity* of someone who does not agree with the educational practice. Classroom interaction is desirable in Demi’s *figured world* (Gee 1991; 2011) as ESL teacher.

In this story, Demi is communicating his perspective of the lack of social good (Gee 1991; 2011) in the educational practice.

Medo described a time during his first job in the UAE when he had conflict with educational practices. The social good at stake here is the issue of not giving homework. Medo is judging this to be unacceptable in terms of his own educational values. The sentence *“So which I thought it was wrong”*, suggests that discourses of professional practice allow some things to be said and other things not. As a new teacher, Medo was not in a position to challenge the supervisor.

*“The supervisor used to tell us at the time, don’t give homework to the students in the weekend, you know. So which I thought it was wrong. Why, why four days, you know. Three days. Thursday, Friday and Saturday, no homework for the students. So, of course, a lot of things I was not happy about many things, especially about education level. And I have sometimes these things, you know, against what I had learned”*

**(Medo)**

Soyal uses the building task of *relationship* (Gee 1991; 2011) to illustrate her subject status in relation to the institutional discourse of her first SIE faculty position:

*“When I came to work in Dubai, when I first came to work in Dubai at this Institute I was not a lady of authority anymore. My boss used to come and say, “Soyal you need to do this. Soyal, why is it that we don’t have that?” You see what I mean? So it was not a really pleasant atmosphere.”*

**(Soyal)**

She uses direct speech, mimicking the *social language* (Gee 1991; 2011) that would have been used in her encounter with an authority figure. By positioning herself in this dialogue as being picked upon, she attributes an *identity* to the institution itself, and how the institution perceived her position as an employee.

### 5.5.1.3 Alienation: Perspectives on *politics* of ESL professionals

*“Researchers of educational practice cannot ignore the language through which that practice is described and evaluated”*

***Pring (2000)***

Pring (2000) cautions his readers about how education is not served when a teacher delivers someone else’s curriculum when that teacher is rooted in a particular cultural tradition. The reason, he suggests, is that the teacher cannot respond to the needs of the learner. The stories of discontent border around SIE faculty being required to “deliver someone else’s curriculum” (Pring, 2000, p.26). The various kinds of discourses described below are not neat, compact summations of either institutional or educational practices. Educational institution and professional conduct, are discernable, but as the narratives show, SIE faculty are constituted by the power relations between these discourses. Interviewees spoke about how the educational principles they held as professional teachers conflicted with the educational practices they were expected to carry out in educational institutions they worked in. In the following extracts, some SIE faculty use language in particular ways to illustrate their alienation from their roles and responsibilities as professional teachers.

Both Demi and James talk about their current teaching jobs in the UAE and both use the building tasks of identity, however with different implications. Demi’s figured world is in terms of how best to respond to learners’ needs, while James’ figured world is encased in his opinion, *“If that’s what they want, then you’ll go with it.”* In the next extract Demi is describing his role in his current job in the UAE. In this story he illustrates how his professional identity is compromised as a result of carrying out the professional duty expected of him.

*"I don't feel like I have an opportunity to put my soul into what I'm doing. I simply have to go into the classroom and deliver the materials. I don't believe in the materials which were created by some other people. And the whole thing of assessment. Assessing what and how doesn't make sense to me. I feel like it's er I'm a factory worker. I work in a conveyor. I'm here only for the salary."*  
**(Demi)**

While Demi stated categorically his opinion of the educational institution and was quite free in his criticism, James tended to hedge his response with the preamble, *"I don't want to say" (... like here)"*

*"If you get a system .... I don't want to say... like here where they don't really care too much about the quality or the content. Or you get unmotivated – not demotivated students who are not bothered, then of course you go with the flow. If that's what they want, then you'll go with it"*  
**(James)**

As I stated earlier, my analysis centres around how individuals are constituted by power relations. Foucault (Tamboukou, 2008) maintained that power produces reality. By presenting these perspectives on effects of power for SIE faculty, my discursive examples lean towards Derrida's (Crotty, 1998) claim that descriptions of reality are conditioned by the standpoint and interests of the observer. In the descriptions which follow, I recreate the stories as the standpoints of SIE faculty, using discourse analysis (Gee 1991, 2011) to show how they represent these stories of power.

Professional identity was at stake in interviewee stories. Janet uses the building task of connections (Gee, 2011) to illustrate her prior teaching roles in relation to her roles at the educational institution she worked at in the UAE. The situated meaning of the passive sentence, *"that autonomy I think has gradually been eroded"* describes how the educational discourse of her current employment positions her subjectivity.

*"...teaching-wise, I had a lot less autonomy in the classroom than any of the other jobs that I've had. And that autonomy I think has gradually been eroded even in the 15 – well, that was quite a long time but um. In one employer it obviously changes"*  
**(Janet)**

In this passage, Sami Ali creates a clear contrast between himself and the person in authority. The words in capitals were stressed, adding significance to the point he makes about his responsible behavior and the unfairness he felt in his powerless situation.

*“One of the things I did was be an administrator of the university. And I did ALL the work. I did everything. And I couldn’t make a decision. I had to leave it to my boss who showed up like once a week and he would just sign off. And not being able to make a decision, sometimes... a LOTTA times hurts. So for me that’s one of the things that er...really made me feel bad and feel awkward because I do all the work, I do everything and then I can’t say yes or no. I have to wait for someone to say yes or no.”*

**(Sami Ali)**

In this extract, Soyal uses situated meanings of “suffer”, “your job, your bread” to create a figured world of the institutional discourse to give weight to the powerlessness she felt. The reader or listener is urged to think about what comes to mind when the speaker uses impassioned word choices to describe the politics of what she thinks is unacceptable.

*“...as a teacher you had to have a good number of students for them to be happy about what was going on. If for whatever reasons they couldn’t recruit some new students, you as a teacher would suffer. So as a teacher, even though, it was not your job to recruit new students, your job, your bread was all based on the number of students they would recruit. The intake, you see what I mean?”*

**(Soyal)**

Jack describes a typical day during “the worst years” of his life during the 1980s when he taught in army barracks in a Gulf country. The figured world he represents in this piece of language describe both classroom interaction and institutional practice.

*“There were a lot of layabouts, to be honest. I think most people would agree that it was a way of keeping juvenile delinquents off the streets. They were in barracks. And they were supposed to be doing classes, but they were clearly the least academically able. Otherwise they would have gone to college or something, so they were in barracks. And they were forced to come to these ridiculous classes in these barracks. Dreadful, filthy barracks we taught in. And we were NOT given any materials. And we were given a blackboard with chalk.*



*And the students just played around – no interest in learning English  
WHATsoever.”*

**(Jack)**

Jack uses brief, impactful sentences, each one containing new detail to build a picture of the significance of the feeling he is enacting. Passive sentence construction (“*they were forced*”, “*we were given*”) in this extract make reference to discourses which he felt alienated from and subjected to. Jack’s description, as well as, all the other stories of discontent, verifies my view as an experience-centred narrative researcher, that narratives live within the individual as opposed to a reality separate from personal story (Squire, 2008). The close analysis of the discourse illustrates their opposition in the face of more powerful structures. While the analysis shows that discourses confer subject status, the discourse analysis also shows that SIE faculty resist the effects of power through referencing their own knowledge claims about professionalism, institutional practice and what constitutes effective learning and teaching.

### **5.5.2 Impact of expatriate locations: Competing discourses**

Interviewees gave detailed stories about how institutions regulated education which impacted them as professional teachers and their efforts to carry out their professional duties. Discourses are embedded in other discourses. The way discourses impact SIE faculty prescribes their subjectivity in all aspects of their ESL roles. For example, in addition to the institutional discourse and the professional discourse, Jack is conditioned by, there is the economic discourse that he needed the income because this job, despite it being so unsatisfactory to him, was a better-paying teaching job.

In each expatriate location represented in these stories, these practices hold political office to distribute social effects in ways that are not contested by other role players, like SIE faculty. The stories that were told are their impressions of political and cultural symbols they encountered in host locations.

### 5.5.2.1 Stories of remuneration in teaching and economic gain

In 2015, the HSBC Expat Explorer Survey (2015), ranked Singapore as the best place to live and work for expats, however, it stated that the Middle East “leads the way in offering high salaries, generous employee benefits and material incentives”. In 2016, these statistics did not change. The survey stated, “Countries in the Middle East are amongst top destinations for expats to earn and save money” (HSBC Expat Explorer Survey 2016). The stories I represent in this section provide people, personalities, histories and identities to the HSBC reports. According to Selmer and Luring (2010), the incentive to make and save a large amount of money is the fourth reason influencing academic SIEs. Of the eight participants in this study, six stated economic benefit as a reason for wanting TEFL jobs in the Gulf. Medo, Janet, Jack and Demi were primarily motivated to relocate to the UAE because of economic gain. Interviewees explained how they came to the UAE. Medo explained that teacher salaries in his home country, Tunisia, were not unfavourable, but his aspirational needs are reflected in this extract:

*“Why did you (I) come to the UAE? Well to be quite frank, it’s because of MONEY. I heard about the packages in the Gulf was much better... at the time it was er.two salaries, you know. Double, you know. What I got into was better.”*  
**(Medo)**

The term “*packages*” is well-known among expatriates and therefore constitutes what Gee (2011) refers to as *conversations* (debates in society that large numbers of people recognize). The conversation is also extended to publications around the subject of Gulf salaries for expatriates, for example, the HSBC surveys. The evidence brought by SIE faculty like Medo, Janet, Jack, and Demi who have lived and benefitted from this economic practice for several years, makes this conversation a discourse as Foucault defined it, i.e. a regulated practice, with rules, routinization and relations among bodies, things actions and concepts (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014).

Although Janet and Medo were at different ages and stages in their lives, both have had long careers in the UAE. The words Janet emphasizes (in capitals) add to the significance she places on her reasons for expatriating with her young family,

*“One important reason, it wasn’t the only reason – but it certainly was important at that point was MONEY. HOUSING. SCHOOL FEES... Benefits which the typical EFL teacher, working in a language school, even for the British Council which is one of the BETTER employers... very few family benefits.*

**(Janet)**

When Demi moved to Taiwan, he and his family initially experienced financial and social relief:

*“Taiwan was different. We were totally independent from our parents. We could survive, we could raise our daughter.”*

**(Demi)**

Later in the interview, Taiwan would come to present a different figured world where “lower” is something he wanted relief from:

*“We felt like lower status people. Lower salary. Salary is much lower there than here. Three times lower. No benefit package. Just insurance. It’s perfect for single men”*

**(Demi)**

The regularity with which the word “package” appears in the data points to the discourse around ESL as a career that does not pay well. The promise of economic relief contained in this line makes a connection (Gee 1991; 2011) between salaries in the UAE and ESL jobs in other countries:

*“A friend of mine told me that this is the best package a language teacher can afford, can dream of...”*

**(Demi)**

Jack held a similar belief to Demi when I asked him if he thought he was getting a good salary when he moved to the Gulf to teach:

*“It WAS a good salary for a language teacher. It’s not a good salary for some people, but if you’re working in a language school in the UK...it’s not a good salary. I can’t remember the figures and I’m talking about the ‘80s anyway, but umm, that would’ve been 3 times the amount working in Abu Dhabi”*

**(Jack)**

In both extracts, the situated meaning of the words “*for a language teacher*” point to the political conversation that in relation to other professions, financial benefits do not match other professions (De Long, 1987; Berry, 1986; Fessler and Christensen, 1992). A noteworthy point is that the sources I quote come from research published at the time Jack would have been relocating to the UAE as SIE faculty. My dilemma in analyzing this story is whether to use the past tense to refer to the ‘80s or to use the present tense to indicate current remuneration practices. The fact that Jack’s comment, in addition to these sources, can still be relevant today in terms of the economic disparity that exists between teaching as a profession and other professions, is part of a *conversation* (Gee, 2011) with a genealogy. More recently, a journalist for the *Financial Times* (20 May 2017) posed this question:

*“Why does teaching attract so few great teachers? One reason may be that it is too poorly paid.”*

**(Shrimley, 2017)**

While 6 of the 8 interviewees presented the same political conversation (Gee, 2011), James presented a totally different figured world with respect to remuneration. In this extract, he presents an identity of someone who is happy with how he has been paid in all his international relocations, an SIE faculty career spanning 30 years.

*James: I got some time off, so I came here [UAE]. Within a week I got a job at the University (Laughs).*

*Interviewer: So you’ve been really fortunate with work*

*James: And also extremely well-paid. ...I've always had government jobs that's why"*

Sami Ali presented a figured world where salary was secondary to relationship and contentment. In this extract, he explains to me why he has occupied an SIE faculty position in the same institution in the UAE since 2001:

*"For me, they like me, I like them. I was offered jobs for MORE money, but I didn't wanna leave. I'm comfortable. I'm happy with what I'm doing"*  
**(Sami Ali)**

### **5.5.3 Impact of expatriate locations**

In this section I describe the consequences for SIE faculty of the effects of expatriating from their home country. They describe their impressions of teaching in their home countries compared to the host location. There are two main themes, the first is about interviewee perception of home countries and the other reveals why interviewees have stayed in their current host location for long periods of time.

#### **5.5.3.1 Discursive constructs of teaching in home countries**

Burr (2003, p.125) suggests that in order to understand society and social life, "we must identify and lay bare the discourses that are currently pulling our strings." In this section I recreate the stories interviewees presented about the discourse of educational institutions back in their home country. In the stories I have reproduced here, SIE faculty present their life-worlds in the light of normative reasoning that would rationalize their choices to choose and choose again, expatriation as the normative choice. Earlier in this chapter I elaborated on the financial decisions or "pull" factors (Richardson and McKenna 2003; Froese, 2012). In this section I present the push factors that prevailed in the life-worlds of interviewees, the reasoning that would give way to SIE faculty becoming entrepreneurs of themselves (Brown, 2015).

Interviewees spoke about the difficulty of teaching in their home countries in terms of the stresses of classroom interaction, job security and remuneration. The extracts below use the building task of politics (Gee 1991; 2011), i.e. what the speaker considers to be problematic, or unacceptable about working as teachers in his/her home country. Estee presents a figured world of classroom teaching with her use of the words “*large classes, discipline problems*”. She uses language to build a particular identity as someone who would not cope with this figured world: “*I didn’t think I’d be able to...*”

*About working back in the country – I didn’t think I’d be able to go back into a school again. You know, with the way things were in the country. Large classes, discipline problems. I didn’t think I would be able to go back into the classroom.*  
**(Estee)**

Jack gives a situated meaning of what “*horrified*” him in this phrase describing the figured world of education in the UK, “*there’s discipline problems.*”

*“I spoke to friends who were teaching in state schools in the UK and they all warned me off. They said there’s discipline problems and it’s very bad – just really horrified me.”*  
**(Jack)**

While Estee was talking about teaching in South Africa and Jack about the UK, they each present similar figured worlds of teaching. Earlier in this section interviewees reported on their experiences of classroom interaction. These conversations that the speaker raises would be known issues to others in the same profession. Interviewee impressions are corroborated in the literature on teacher experiences in the work place. Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1989) describe teacher stress as the experience of tension, frustration, anxiety resulting from work, and remains a high contributor for teacher attrition rates. According to Macdonald (1999), feeling comfortable in their teaching location is important to teachers’ satisfaction.

Janet declares, *“The jobs - are overseas.”* Using language to build connections between job security for teachers in the UK and international locations, the situated meaning of *“less attractive”*, *“a LOT more difficult”* and *“impossible”* positions her as someone who believed that viable work options were available to her in other parts of the world, but not in her home country.

*So when I was in Egypt, this is what people were saying about in the UK. So it became sort of less attractive. At that time I didn't have any immediate plans to go back to the UK anyway, but if I had, I think it would have become less attractive given that it's a LOT more difficult to get... well certainly to get PERMANENT jobs, if not impossible”*  
**(Janet)**

In the next piece of language, Demi builds connections between remuneration for educators in the Ukraine compared to the job he has now. The situated meaning of *“miniscule”* presents the profession of teaching as an unsustainable choice for his family responsibilities:

*“I would be happy to go back to my home country and work there. But the salary will be miniscule compared to - and my wife is not going to like it. And my daughter will have to find financial resources – I don't know where...”*  
**(Demi)**

Interviewees sought to counter the effects of their subject status within education discourses in their own countries as they experienced them by positioning themselves as SIE faculty. James uses the building task of relationship to explain how he sees his role as one where he has the power to *“teach them [ESL students] something.”*

*“But by actually teaching language, they've already met you half way. They want you to teach them something. They're dependent on you to some extent, so it's very important is that, because it puts you in a good position.”*  
**(James)**

In this extract Estee uses the building task of relationship to distinguish between ESL teaching (in Poland) and high school teaching in the earlier part of her career:

*“There was no stress and strain of like teaching high school kids, where you’ve got to consider discipline. Here there were people who came to learn English because they wanted to. So there was nothing forced about it, which was enjoyable.”*  
**(Estee)**

On the one hand, it could be seen that Janet, James, Jack, Demi and Estee redefined their agency in terms of their career path by choosing serial expatriation i.e. they had expatriated for work and repatriated several times. On the other hand, the stories in this section show SIE faculty as subjectively positioned in discourses that condition their mobility. In a combined total of 29 times, these five interviewees self-expatriated repeatedly. Jack, James and Estee moved away from their home countries for 2-3 years at a time, then returned for short stays before expatriating again. The biographic information in section 5.1 describes personal or socio-economic push/pull factors as the reasons behind their serial expatriation.

#### **5.5.4 Stories of extended temporary stay**

At the time of interviewing, seven of the eight participants had been living in the UAE between 8 to 16 years. Soyal, Sami Ali and Medo moved to the UAE from their home countries and each have stayed in the UAE for more than 10 years. Reasons for staying are complex and range between personal, political, and economic considerations. Soyal’s description below not only presents her figured world of the UAE, but by implication, her figured worlds of Jordan and Palestine. The situated meaning of *“and most importantly because it’s a SAFE country”* confirms the finding in Chapman et al (2014) that a smaller percentage of expatriate teachers find the stability of the UAE more comfortable than their home countries:

*“I can find... in Dubai... I can find better job opportunities than the job opportunities which can be available in Jordan and Palestine, my country. And because the standards of life are higher and better and most importantly because it’s a SAFE country which one can enjoy living in. (Soyal)”*



Medo stated that political factors in his home country, combined with what he perceived as challenging work conditions there, meant that he chose to stay in the UAE. In the extract below he alludes to an event in recent history. This conversation, which would be widely-known, refers to the political uprising in Tunisia. The situated meaning of “After 2010,” creates the figured world of, “A lot of instability”:

*“...especially after what has happened here. After 2010. A lot of changes going on. A lot of instability. So it’s hard, really hard.”*  
**(Medo)**

To this figured world, where the listener is drawn in by the image it creates in the mind, he presents a political building task (i.e. a statement of what he considers right or proper). This is contained in his impression of the lack of progress he sees in his alma mater. All of this provides the reason for his building task of identity (how he wants to be seen) *“I can’t imagine myself...”*

*And er... just imagine, the University [of Tunis] hasn’t changed for all these years! I mean the conditions of the teachers hasn’t changed, so really, I can’t imagine myself teaching in a place where the basic facilities are not available. That’s a big issue, you know.*  
**(Medo)**

In this piece of language, Demi disprivileges his identity as a teacher with a Masters degree.

*“I’m stuck. I’ve got Masters only in teaching English as a second language. And this seems to be the best package in terms of money, right?”*  
**(Demi)**

Jack’s response to my question about why he has lived in the UAE for so long was direct:

*“There is a very simple answer – MONEY. Because I very wisely decided in my 50s, to buy a house in England. So of course a house in England is very expensive and a large mortgage, so that’s the answer – to pay off the mortgage. So when I leave here it will all be paid off.”* **(Jack)**

Jack, Demi and Soyal use the building task of *connections* to talk about the issues that they regard as significant. For Jack and Demi, it is material well-being. Jack makes his home ownership significant, Demi makes his lack of other qualifications significant. The reasons they give as significant become the reasons they have stayed in the UAE for as long as they have.

Schoepp (2011) found that the financial aspect of staying with UAE educational institutions was the most dominant finding in their quantitative study. Richardson and McKenna (2002, p. 471) refer to the expatriate academics who identified money as their primary driver to expatriation as “mercenary”. Schoepp (2011) suggests that questions need to be raised about the type of expatriate faculty person that is attracted to the UAE primarily because of financial benefit. I would like to suggest that my qualitative study provides answers to Schoepp’s (2011) suggestion. From a social constructionist perspective (Burr, 2003) we need to see the stories of SIE faculty and their relations to their institutions as embedded in various discourses around economics and their subject status which positioned them in the figured worlds they left behind.

#### **5.5.5 Stories of personal history traversing socio-political change**

Characteristically, qualitative data is “voluminous, bulky and dispersed” (Punch 2007, p. 174). An unexpected finding amidst all of this in my cache was that some or other historical event between the 1970s to the present day affected the interviewees in a personal or professional way. In the following section of first person stories of experience, I attend to discursive features of narrative as I did in previous sections of the findings. The major historical events identified in these stories as situated meanings are the big narratives of our time (the Vietnam War, the end of apartheid in South Africa, the collapse of the USSR, *Intifada* in Palestine). They changed the course of nations and will forever be markers on the timeline of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The stories I have reproduced are the figured worlds of the people who have witnessed these huge events. The stories I collected are extensive, so I am electing to write about the diversity of accounts

that came with a participant's positioning within socio-political discourses. The data showed that these events were in some cases instrumental in the career paths that would become available to the interviewees. In other cases, socio-political conflict facilitated job opportunities in ESL. All of the participants who spoke of an historic event they lived through could relate to how it impacted their lives directly.

#### **5.5.5.1 War as ELT opportunity**

James, Jack and Sami Ali each told their story of how a war situation led to their English language teacher careers. In the 1970s the British Council offered support to refugees from the Vietnam War (1955 – 1975), which created the occasion for James to teach Vietnamese refugees who settled in the UK. He distinguishes between EFL and ESL teaching in his career experience, describing the two as, “very different in lots of ways”. Alatis (2005) explains that ESL is teaching English to non-native speakers who settle in countries where English is an official language. James' account illustrates how the theory worked in practice. I ask him to explain the difference between his experience in Denmark and teaching Vietnamese refugees in the UK:

*Very different. Very different because it's all related to services offered in Britain. So it was about how to integrate and assimilate into British society. How to use services, so they had to understand lots and lots of vocab that you would never have to teach in er.. English as a foreign language.*

**(James)**

James' description above seems to confirm Alatis' background information on the changes in ESL in the 1970s, the period of time when James was teaching refugees in the UK. Alatis' (2005, p. 30) says that there were “significant changes in the form and substance of ESL classroom practices”. ESL students were required to “experiment with the language, to create sentences on their own” (ibid). The narratives recreated in this section depict how interviewees positioned themselves. James admitted that travelling to Hong Kong, which was British

territory in the 1970s, to collect refugees was “a shock to my [his] system because it made me [him] realize there were other things happening outside the UK.” In the extract below he presents a vivid figured world of his interaction with the refugees. Vietnamese immigration to the UK started after the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. James’ first person account of stories of the refugee situation positioned him as an ESL teacher as a consequence of the fallout of this war.

*I was actually teaching Vietnamese. And Cambodians, and Chinese to some extent as well, who were on refugee status and who were due to be settled in England. It was ESL this time, not EFL and very different in lots of ways... And just to give you a picture of what it was... I was living in this house and I would wake up and I was totally disorientated because, really, you think you're in England, but you're not, because all around you, you're surrounded by people speaking Vietnamese! (laughs) And you'll hear them walking along, you know, as you're waking and you think, where am I? you know, cos' I was in little mini Vietnam!*

**(James)**

Stories such as James’ account, not only has significance for researchers analyzing how people talk about their lives, but also gives an eye-witness account of the impact on the socio-political context. James’ story, Sami Ali’s story which follows next and Jack’s story thereafter are what Germeten (2013, p. 612) might call “unique personal histories as examples of the political histories being told”.

As a refugee from Palestine, Sami Ali learned English in the United States. His forays into language teaching began informally, starting with an early recognition that he had a special ability as a result of the fallout of war and subsequent displacement. He says:

*moving from one place to another, I learned accents, I learned languages, I was able to... it was very flexible for me to learn a language. So I thought, you know, I'm good. And I decided to become a teacher.*

**(Sami Ali)**

Sami Ali's development as an ELT teacher illustrates Trejo Guzmán's (2010) finding that micro-social and macro-social influences are important for teacher self-formation. Just as these kinds of factors influenced the participants in her study to become English language teachers, so too did the macro-social influences in Sami Ali's life. The Six Day War (1967) affected Sami Ali's life and had consequences for how he positioned himself as a refugee in different foreign environments (viz. Jordan and the USA). Moving to the US, helped him become fluent in English. In the extract below he explains how micro-social factors (moving back to Palestine and interacting with family) and macro-social factors (having learned English as a result of his refugee status in the US), determined his career choice. He was sent back to Palestine to live with uncles because he exhibited difficult behavior, which he explains he developed as a result of having been so traumatized by war. This event proved to be seminal in his development. The situated meanings ("*I became*", "*I moved*", "*I was able to*", "*I had a knack for it*") suggest that he was building a new identity, one which would lead him to become an ESL teacher.

*I became a teacher for my ...er... nieces and nephews because my nieces and nephews STAYED in Palestine. So when I moved back and gained the fluency of English from being in the States, after being a refugee, so... and they had a problem with English. So I was able to teach them and help them in their...er... English classes, English homework and I had a knack for it. And I thought... you know... I can do this. And I did. And I studied even before I completed college, I was giving private lessons. And people PAID and I thought hmmm that's a good thing.*

**(Sami Ali)**

Just like the previous two stories, Jack's story highlights the connections between the political and individual stories. Jack taught in the West Bank, Palestine during the *Intifada* (1987-1993) and was an eye-witness to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The refugee situation that arose out of that conflict allowed him to teach ESL to the Palestinian refugees. Jack's account of teaching during

socio-political unrest presents different aspects of working in a conflict zone. His dialogue presents a perspective of the students he taught. In the following extract his use of language builds identity of the students as co-operative:

*...about 50% of the students are Christian and about 50% Muslim but in those days, there was no hostility between them on campus. The students closed ranks as Palestinians and there was camaraderie.*

**(Jack)**

However, he also says that day-to day life in the refugee camp where he taught had “*a general atmosphere of fear*”, because of regular conflict between soldiers and Palestinian youths, “there was open fighting and students were rioting in the streets”

The personal histories reflected here need to be viewed alongside the larger political and ideological context. Socio-political processes affected the life chances of interviewees at a given time and place. In the next section, I analyze the effects of critical incidents experienced by Demi, Estee and Soyal in their homelands.

### **5.5.5.2 Critical incidents that shaped SIE faculty**

In this section I look at the socio-political processes that contributed to shaping the ESL directions interviewees took. In analyzing the stories from interviewees, I am inviting a social constructionist perspective that views the person as a product of socio-cultural discourses. By attending to language and form, I am suggesting that how a speaker uses language to describe a life turning point is significant. Each interviewee places themselves in a certain subject position in relation to the socio-political discourse. These subject positions are often layered and complex, as I will illustrate.

The situated meaning of the political event Estee describes (“*after democracy*”) provided the context that would give her the scope to leave a full-time teaching job and propel her towards her career as SIE faculty:

*I think it was.... the time... after '94...when... after democracy, right?...think most whites... I'm talking in the South African context...white and Indian teachers were given severance packages to leave, so that we could make way...to address the injustices of the past with the black teachers... make scope for more black teachers. I thought it was time to leave as well.*

**(Estee)**

The new democracy in South Africa in the 1990s made certain subject positions available. The “*severance package*” she refers to would have afforded her three things; viz, firstly, she benefitted financially, secondly, she could start her ESL career, and thirdly, she positions herself as someone who wanted to be instrumental in making “*scope for more black teachers*”. Like Estee, Demi also used socio-political change as a catalyst for his changing subjectivity. Demi’s experience suggests that, firstly, he positioned himself not in opposition to the wider socio-political environment, and the discursive choice he uses, “*sneaking out*” would suggest that he capitalized on this “*chaos*”. Secondly, the figured world he describes illustrates how multiple positions can be made available in a socio-political situation (La Pointe, 2010).

*I didn't have any problems getting American visa and Ukrainians didn't have any problems with my going there. And it was time of the 90s and it was total chaos. - everything was criminal. Even the government was corrupt and criminal. They're still corrupt, actually. Then it was totally corrupt. There was no problem for me sneaking out.*

**(Demi)**

When Demi uses the situated meaning, “*time of the 90s*”, he is referring to the collapse of the USSR (1991) and the political turmoil in the Ukraine that presented him with the opportunity to do a Masters degree in the US. With this qualification he would eventually become SIE faculty.

Both Sami Ali and Soyal witnessed war during their childhood, growing up in Palestine. The Arab-Israeli conflict had direct influence in them becoming ESL teachers. The following extract comes from Soyal's memory of dealing with Israeli occupation (1967-1993) and how it led to a life-path:

*"I remember that when we were having our general certificate examination...English language examination, I remember that the electricity was cut all of a sudden. It was not our area, because Israeli government used to divide it into areas. For example, in Nablus, areas A & B, it's on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Areas C and D, it's for example, on Saturday, Tuesday and say Thursday. So I remember it was not our area's day. All of a sudden, believe it or not, Shifa, the whole city was dark. Not a single light you could see. They cut it. So that night I decided I would specialize in English.*

**(Soyal)**

The situated meaning of *"they"* (*They didn't want people to be educated*) in this memory assigns motive, method and identity of the Israelis against *"people"* (Palestinians). This act of cutting the power to the town, incited defiance in her to learn English. The situated meaning of *"English is a UNIVERSAL language"* in Soyal's figured world is an example of intertextuality. Intertextuality functions as cross-reference to another type of text, either spoken or written (Gee, 2011). As a young person, Soyal adopted this belief that must have been prevalent in her environment. In this recollection of the event, the intertextual references (capitalized) are made significant as a way out of the subjugation she felt:

*They knew that ... maybe it was...well, according to the best of my knowledge, they came to know that the day after was the English language examination day. And they knew that it was ENGLISH. They didn't want people to be educated. And as you know, English is a UNIVERSAL language, an INTERNATIONAL language. So what did they do? All of a sudden, all the city was dark.*



### **5.5.6 Stories of othering, and being attributed a certain identity**

Interviewees spoke of experiences of being attributed an identity as a result of their nationality. Although interviewees told a number of stories in this category, I have selected those that relate to their experiences as SIE faculty. The process of othering (Palfreyman, 2005) meant that interviewees felt marginalized as a result of the TEFL settings they found themselves in in different parts of the world. All the interviewees could recall a story where they were othered or did the othering. In this section I focus on those stories which involved them as SIE faculty. The data showed that othering can be multi-faceted in SIE faculty experience. To illustrate the multi-faceted nature of SIE experiences, I have categorized the stories in this section using quotes from interviewees.

#### **5.5.6.1 “it was special in those days”**

Some interviewees had positive stories to tell about how they were viewed as other and had a beneficial presence in their host communities. James and Janet present figured worlds where their difference was something that was valued. James uses the building task of identity to illustrate the situated meaning of, “*you were special*”. In this extract, he talks about his physical appearance as being viewed with respect:

*When I first started out, it was extremely safe to go anywhere and do anything and because - you were special. I was a white- skinned guy in some places. And I was so much taller, you know... I could see across a great mountain of Vietnamese, or you know, or the spread of Japanese on a public holiday and I was noticed, you know wherever I went. People would say, “We saw you there, Teacher,” you know. So it was special in those days*

**(James)**

When Janet uses the building task of identity, it is with reference to her orientation within her host community:

*We found the Lebanese VERY, very welcoming to us as outsiders. Some of my Lebanese friends would say, “Yes, they’re more likely to be more friendly to you than US coming from a different ethnic and political group. So there was less mixing among the political groups, actually. Outside the classroom.*

**Janet**

The figured worlds represented here raise the question of what aspects of race discourse and language were prevalent. When an interviewee uses the building task of identity, they are also attributing identity to other role-players represented in their figured worlds. With accounts like Janet’s and James’ it becomes easy to see how global mobility orientation has positive outcomes when discourses around othering proffers subject positions that expatriates accept.

#### **5.5.6.2 “But they don’t know what it means to be a language teacher”**

The group of stories which follow, recall memory of the lack of negotiation around their subject positions. Interviewees spoke about how their positioning in discourses in TEFL and around native language teachers impact them. In this extract, Demi enacts a situated identity (Gee, 2011) as “*a specialist in teaching and learning*”, but because of his positioning in TEFL discourses, his subjectivity is in relation to native English speakers from “*other fields*”. In this piece of language, he is reflecting on his work experience in Taiwan and the UAE:

*Most of the people surrounding me are here either from other fields — native speakers. They can be engineers or unsuccessful business people and they can still teach English. They have higher degree, higher education. But they don’t know what it means to be a language teacher, you know. But still they get this job. So there’s no difference between me as a specialist in teaching and learning and an engineer who teaches the same thing, the same subject.*

**(Demi)**

Soyal also enacts a situated identity in this extract. Here she depicts her nationality as a casualty produced by the discourses in TEFL:

*But when it comes to erm, salaries, when it comes to salaries-related issues...yeah. Of course there are differences. You expect that after all my experience I can EVER, EVER, work at the [name of institution]? Impossible! I'm \*Soyal.. I'm not Mary. I'm not blonde. And my father is \*Ismail. And great-grandfather is \*Mahmood. And I hold a Jordanian passport. Of which I'm so PROUD, but it's a Jordanian passport. It's not a Canadian. \* names have been changed*

**(Soyal)**

The stories that have been co-constructed above appear to confirm Romney's (2010) statement that teachers with certain language and or racial backgrounds are sometimes perceived to have a kind of value that others do not have.

### **5.5.6.3 “he took advantage of that”**

The three female participants in the study made reference to their subject positions as women and the bias they encountered. The following stories capture the result of their vulnerable positioning. Stories in this section are based around personal conflict. The stories recreated in this section show that female SIE faculty could encounter “gendered regimes” (Stalker and Mavin, 2011, p.275) in different host locations. In the following extract, I reproduce part of a longer conversation with Soyal when she took her first SIE teaching job at the Dubai International Cultural Institute in 2000. She had come to Dubai with two young children. In this part of the interview, the word “alone” appears frequently in her discourse, a status that she believes put her in a vulnerable position in terms of negotiating her salary.

*Err, It's that when I was in Jordan, I was promised of a salary, which unfortunately I was not paid. When my ex,ex,ex boss realized that I was in need of money, I was alone, I was, I was...he took advantage of that. So the salary was paid was less, ...*

**(Soyal)**

In this extract, Estee presents a figured world of customary practice in a south east Asian society. Below, she describes the work environment of a language

school, the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) in Brunei. Estee found the traditional socio-cultural values in the workplace inhibiting:

*Um, I think initially, what upset me, or I was disappointed with the ASIAN culture, was the way women were treated. Like you couldn't shake hands with a man. You just had to say hello or something. You couldn't talk freely without there being some suspicion attached to it. You were not free to talk to your colleague....*  
**(Estee)**

In this piece of language she enacts the relationship (Gee, 2011) practice of the particular cultural discourse that had the effect of alienating her in the context of that society. The story recreated here shows how she experienced gender bias:

*Also I didn't find that men in that culture were GENTLEMANLY towards women. Like say, if you needed help with something, you wouldn't find a local man coming to your assistance. But the westerners would do that. So I found that to be a bit uncomfortable to deal with.*

The situated meaning of the hedging phrase, “*a bit uncomfortable to deal with*,” could possibly be attributed to her cultural intelligence (Lauring and Selmer, 2014). Gee (1999, 2011) suggests that when using discourse analysis to analyse speech, the analyst needs to ask the question, “How else could the respondent have said this?” A feature of Soyal's and Estee's re-telling of their experiences was to hedge the impression of an encounter that may be viewed as contentious to the listener.

Janet uses the building task of practice (Gee, 2011) to suggest the dialogue between her and her employers in Lebanon, the British Council in Beirut. In this extract she describes the organizational practice regarding the sponsorship of her dependents:

*My er husband was also sponsored through my employer. My daughter was born there. And initially she was sponsored by... through my employer. And then all of a sudden they'd said, “Oh no, we can't sponsor dependents anymore.” So I handed in my notice and left half way through.*

**(Janet)**

When I ask Janet to explain the effect of this change in her work contract, she uses situated meaning (“angry,” “*I would have preferred it*”) to describe the figured world of how this regulation impacted her:

*I was actually quite angry. They couldn't just say, “OH WELL, the laws have changed and a woman can no longer sponsor her male dependent. Which may have been the truth... but I would have preferred it if they said, “Well, this is it!*

Janet states, “*the laws have changed*”, suggesting that national culture influenced the experience of female SIE faculty. Similarly, Estee’s story shows that the work context was defined by ideological influences that affected her as a female in that society.

The stories recreated here show how gendered workplaces place SIE female faculty at considerable disadvantage. Because she could not get the sponsorship for her family, Janet had to leave Lebanon. Soyal’s experience of being foreign, female and “*alone*” in Dubai shows how seeking employment independently resulted in the fact that she was paid less than she expected.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I presented the life-world (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009) summaries of participants in the study. They range in age, nationality, marital status and work experience. My interest in retelling their life-world stories comes from their position as SIE faculty. The data I collected through each interview recorded what happened to the person. The use of quotes in the summary of participant stories reflects my intention to follow Gee (2011, p.9) who said that one needs to analyze language as it is being used. My consideration of the quotes selected was an effort to provide a language framework to show participants’ different ways of “saying things, doing things and being things in the world”. I have used discourse analysis (Gee 1991, 1999, 2011) to provide evidence for the themes I have identified across the data. The quotes which illustrate the themes in the data are indicative of what participants want and value (*Stories of job satisfaction*)

and conversely, what participants do not regard as “social good” (*Stories of discontent*). I have presented evidence that data can be studied as discursive practices. I have examined what interviewees said from the perspective of what they understand as educational and professional knowledge. The way I have sorted out stories is by using a theoretical framework for discourse analysis to arrive at meaning within the story. This, I believe, is one level of sense-making. In the next chapter, I elaborate on how SIE faculty use language to talk about their experiences and what this might mean when people construct the stories of their lives.

## CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION

### Introduction

*“Interpretation is the product of frail human minds and histories, not prophets or gods”*

**Gee (2016)**

As I prepare to write the final sections of my thesis, I reflect on the extent to which researchers present meaning as “pure, solid, self-identical facts which can be used to anchor the work” (Kakoliris, 2009). After reading a number of research studies, I am aware of such a researcher position, but equally aware of Gee’s (2016) which introduces this chapter. Therefore I move towards finding a researcher position somewhere along this spectrum of representation in qualitative research. This section of the thesis will uncover themes identified in the analysis of the interviews to contextualize and discuss them in the larger frames of globalization, neoliberal governmentality, self-initiated expatriate research and discourse theory. These themes were described in reference to the theoretical framework in chapter 3. The study is underpinned by social constructionist theory, supported by post-structural perspectives of discourse. This is the theoretical basis for the analytic categories I use to explore and understand SIE faculty experiences. Prominent themes identified in the data will be described and discussed.

Central to this discussion is how discourses impact SIE faculty to the extent that their choices are conditioned by their experiences of economic, institutional, educational, professional and socio-political discourses as they move across geographical boundaries during their long-term ESL careers. There were two research questions that framed this study. The first was how do SIE faculty frame their experience prior to expatriation? A subsidiary question was how does this framing impact their experience in host countries? The second question asked

how have SIE faculty produced their agency within the socio-political milieux of their experience?

Findings showed areas of overlap, so for this reason the presentation of themes in the findings should be seen as interlinked and interwoven. In this chapter I discuss the kinds of stories that interviewees told in relation to the themes that came up in the data. I start with a description of motivation stories to contextualize them in social and political developments. In addition, I consider the implications for narrative analysis of these stories.

## **6.1 Motivation stories**

The topic of globalization is commonly discussed in research on expatriates and the subject of motivation is identified as a popular research theme. Motivation has been researched in other studies on expatriate teachers (Zafar Khan, 2011; Chapman et al, 2014; Richardson and McKenna, 2002; Neilsen, 2009; Johnston, 1999) as well as self-initiated expatriates (Lauring and Selmer, 2014; Stalker and Mavin, 2011; Doherty, 2013). Motivation has been described as “a micro-level capability” (Doherty, 2013), “personal fulfilment” (Richardson and McKenna, 2002), “a desire to see the world” (Neilsen, 2009) and “intrinsic motivation” (Zafar Khan, 2011).

The main findings based on the analyses of the research data, showed that the SIE faculty in my study were initially motivated to expatriate for reasons that have been characterized as adventure-seeking or factors in their personal or work situations that made them want to escape situations that they deemed intolerable. Whether they wanted to relocate for reasons of adventure and discovery or to alleviate the effects of a bitter life or work situation, each research participant had an opportunity to do ELT in a foreign location. In their interviews, SIE faculty in this study narrated their personal accounts of how overseas ELT jobs became a viable opportunity for them. These opportunities were underpinned by global demand for ELT in many countries and the research



participants in this study who have lived and worked in 28 countries, are a testimony to the demand for ELT globally.

Discourse analysis highlighted that motivations need to be looked at within the broader context of the personal circumstances of each SIE in line with the understanding that each expatriate story of mobility is an individual story, and moreover, each story is told from a personal or socio-political context. In chapter 5 I stated that these stories are representative of how global developments occasioned the demand for ELT teachers in various parts of the world. Moreover, geopolitical developments influenced socio-political and socio-cultural conditions in the various societies the interviewees came from. My study suggests that the metanarrative of psychological states (Burr, 2003) as reason for motivation is limited if it is not viewed from the origination of discourse around internationalization and global possibilities for work. In the next section I look at how the methodology informs the findings on SIE faculty motivation.

## **6.2 Postmodern story forms and motivation stories**

Barkhuizen (2011, p.394) suggests that narrative researchers in TESOL need to locate “their epistemological and methodological selves” in narrative research. Johnston (1999) seems to interpret the narratives of his participants from the perspective Barkhuizen (ibid) calls “disconnections, dead-ends and uncertainties”. By this I mean that Johnston (1999, p.268) reports on the “disjunctures” he found in the narratives of EFL teachers in his study. He attributes this to the “absence of causal links in the narrative structure with regard to how participants in his study described the reasons for taking up EFL positions in Poland. The discursive analysis he points out suggests a “reduction of a major life decision to random choice”. LaPointe (2010, p. 2) who did a study on career identity, holds a similar view that “narratives construct causality and continuity”, necessary for a sense of identity and coherence.

My view, by contrast, is similar to Kvale and Brinkman (2009), that not all aspects of human experience fit into coherent narrative. Johnstone's (1999) research does not include interviewees who have been referred to as "redemption seekers" (Chapman et al, 2014) or those expatriates who wanted to "escape" (Richardson and McKenna, 2002, p. 71; Doherty, 2013, p.450). In my study, push factors have been identified in the stories of escape. These push factors might be considered the causal link that Johnstone looked for in his narrative analysis of participant accounts of why they sought expatriate relocations. In the stories of escape (chapter 5) narrative is viewed from an experience-centred perspective rather than the structural accounts which Johnstone favours. I have explained how experience-centred narratives (Squire, 2008) address life turning points rather than narrative structure. In a sense all the told stories, i.e. leaving and escape, represent life turning points for the participants. This will be more fully discussed later in this chapter in the section, *Reimagining expatriation*. While Johnston (1999) critiqued the lack of depth in postmodern work experience of ELT teachers, my own postmodern sense acknowledges disordered lifeworld accounts, and looks toward discourse analysis for meaning making in fragmented stories. A postmodern perspective sees difference as the norm, rather than homogeneity in social practices. (Canagarajah, 2016).

My perspective of narrative analysis is that participants story their lives in different ways (Vàsquez, 2011, p. 543) and therefore my interest is in the "speaker's discursive choices" for talking about their lifeworld. Moreover, the "accidental" career for SIE faculty can be considered a genre of story as this study (see 5.1), as well as other research studies show (St John, 2011; Neilsen, 2009, Chapman et al, 2014). The approach to narrative analysis favoured in my study is that narratives are not consistent and coherent representations (Vàsquez, 2011) of a reality.

## 6.3 Stories of work experience

*“Power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives”*

**(Foucault, 1982)**

The findings on SIE faculty experiences of discourses they encountered illustrate this quote by Foucault. ESL teacher experiences have been analysed as stories of job satisfaction and stories of discontent. These experiential references define their “actions and attitudes” and indeed, their “everyday lives” (ibid).

### 6.3.1 Job satisfaction

Findings from the current study indicate that SIE faculty experiences in host locations showed that job satisfaction comes from positive teacher-student classroom interaction and a supportive environment to work in. The importance of teacher-student rapport has been noted by other EFL researchers, such as Zafar-Khan (2011); Trejo Guzmán (2010) and Troudi (2009). Zafar-Khan (2011) found that for the participants in her study of motivation factors in long-term EFL teachers in Oman, getting a positive response from students has a positive impact on teachers’ job satisfaction. Trejo Guzmán (2010), in her narrative study of the formation of teachers’ identities similarly reported that it was the reaction of students that motivated the EFL teachers in her study to improve their teaching practice. Troudi (2009, p.61) lists 11 qualities he associates with the “human side of teaching”. In my study, some of these qualities could be interpreted in teacher stories of work experience. For example, in their narrative accounts, SIE faculty illustrate how they have enacted the qualities he explains. This illustrative list includes “consideration of the other” (Jack) “dedication to trusting students” (Janet, Demi) “love of education and learning” (Soyal).

In the data I have shown how discourse analysis goes to the felt effect of what teachers do in terms of the “social good” (Gee, 2011) they deliver. The discourse

analysis approach I used to analyse the stories show that satisfaction is tied up with professional knowledge and discursively illustrates Troudi's (2009, p. 64) point that "what teachers value is recognition of their experience and professionalism". A contrasting point which defines this further is made by Zafar-Khan (2011, p.131) who reported that lack of "recognition, approval and appreciation" for their "input" led ESL teachers in her study to feel discouraged and frustrated. Findings from my study indicate that SIE faculty thrived when there was space for them to use their professional knowledge and put it into practice.

### **6.3.2 Discontent**

The overseas work experience is also characterized by challenge. Findings from the current study showed that SIE faculty are required to maintain professional or educational practice as deemed appropriate by the institutions they are employed in. These practices are often incongruent with their own understanding of responsible practice in their work setting. Other studies have reported similar findings, for example, Troudi (2009, p. 64) noted that teachers experience dissatisfaction and frustration when they "feel that they are not performing to their potential because of policies and regulations." McLeod (2013) reported that the research participants in his study were planning to leave the institution they were working in because they could not agree with objectives in the professional context as set out by the management.

A number of researchers have investigated the stressors EFL teachers experience. Aubrey (2014) found that his survey of 134 EFL teachers in the UAE showed that a predominant cause of stress was dealing with uninterested students. Syed (2003) also reports that student motivation is a challenge for teachers in the Arabian Gulf, while MacLeod (2013) stated that the participants in his study who worked at a federal tertiary institution in the UAE spoke of the difficulty of teaching students with low aptitude. Interview data in the current study suggests that SIE faculty are obliged, for the sake of maintaining their jobs and

securing their income, to act in defense of discourses they do not want to participate in.

### **6.3.3 Redefining assumptions of representation**

In this section I discuss how SIE faculty “engage with the dominant discourse[s] from within” (Crotty, 1998, p. 205). The postmodern perspective is that an *episteme*, shapes our views, and produces our reality, hence, the subject can only engage from within this power structure. Foucault (1982) defined episteme as a set of rules that determine what does and does not get taken seriously. In this discussion of the findings, I take the poststructuralist view that SIE faculty share their descriptions of reality and that these need to be understood from the “standpoint and interests of the observer” (Crotty, 1998, p. 205). The binary between stories of job satisfaction and stories of discontent brings into postmodern focus that difference represents the episteme.

At an ideological level, the stories of job satisfaction are told from the perspective of how SIE faculty claim participation within discourses which have framed their experience. My study has shown that normative assumptions of what causes teacher career happiness, and ESL teacher dissatisfaction as expounded in previous research studies, show up what Derrida called a “play of differences” (Crotty, 1998, p. 207). In this discussion I want to move away from normative reports of how research studies present these as distinct categories and challenge this representation of meaning. Following Scheurich (1997), my purpose is to question the basic assumptions on which research is based. We may look at the stories of SIE faculty experience in the workplace (stories of satisfaction, stories of discontent) as personal histories, but call into question what appears as self-evident. According to Tamboukou (2008, p. 112) we need to detach ourselves from our “truths” and seek alternative ways of existence. Bearing in mind that I have already stated that we cannot break from the episteme, I am not convinced about “alternative ways of existence” (ibid), but we (i.e. SIE faculty) can use our now detached knowledge to become aware of what

controls us. Binary representation of our work experience presents us with a knowability of how discourses of power include, exclude, permit, disallow, attract and disenchant us in the work we do as ESL teachers. While EFL researchers study the impact of student-teacher interaction, SIE researchers, such as Doherty (2013) are calling for more research on the impact of SIEs in the workplace. My study shows the impact of the workplace as discursively represented. Details within the stories of job satisfaction and discontent clearly define how the workplace is perceived, and what the range of factors are that make up the complexity of SIE faculty experience.

### **6.3.4 Humanist recommendations and poststructuralist challenge**

Researchers (Zembylas, 2003; Zafar Khan, 2011; McLeod 2013; Aubrey, 2014) have offered recommendations for change based on their findings of what their research participants have revealed as challenging in their institutions. These recommendations could serve to inform administrations in tertiary institutions to “adopt policies to promote psychological health” (Zafar Khan, 2011, p.154), or they offer advice to teachers to “alleviate their stress” (Aubrey, 2014, p. 91). McLeod (2013, p. 200) suggests change in teacher education to “problematize notions of culture”. Studies that centralize humanist approaches seem to look towards reconciliation and a perceived need for moving towards positivity. I want to suggest that when researchers make recommendations for change they need to be aware of how these are to be read. From a postmodern perspective, recommendations cannot be read as conclusive, because their implementation is presented within a discourse which, as Zembylas (2003, p. 215-221) states, is subject to change, conflict, and competing discourses, “constantly providing new configurations”. Zembylas (ibid) further explains that narrative research is a means for understanding teachers’ culture, representing “teachers as knowers of themselves, of their situations”. Bearing this is in mind I want to bring in the social constructionist view that by examining the discourses and positions available to them, SIE faculty could “work towards occupying positions in

discourses which are less personally damaging” (Burr, 2003, p. 123). Reid (Haug and Reid 2017, p. 255) suggests that Foucault promoted the idea that human subjects must get used to a life of adapting to “continuously changing topographies of danger”. SIE faculty as neoliberal subject can still express resilience in terms of how they buy into the discourses of power and their interpretive knowledge of these.

#### **6.4 SIE faculty as *homo economicus***

*“Power lies with those who are able to determine what alternatives are on offer”*  
**MacIntyre (1988)**

In chapter 3 I described neoliberalism, governmentality, and their impact on subjects. In this section I reflect on perspectives of these concepts and their implications for SIE faculty. A key finding was that SIE faculty take on governmentality as a mode of governing themselves. As a response to the push/pull factors affecting expatriate relocations, SIE faculty have used serial expatriation as a “technology of the self” (Brady, 2014, p. 20). The stories of remuneration reproduced in chapter 5 illustrate the amalgam of economics and education and how SIE faculty are positioned in this complex form of power. Serial expatriates like James, Janet, Jack, Estee and Demi moved a combined total of 30 times, spanning 28 countries. These interviewees were taking up the opportunities of market rationalization in ELT as a “global commercial enterprise” (Neilsen, 2009). The impact of expatriate locations effectively produced SIE faculty as *homo economicus*, establishing them as market actors, embodying neoliberal values of enterprise and productivity (Brady, 2014; Brown, 2015; Flew, 2010). In the biographic detail in chapter 5 I have given details of how all the interviewees improved their sellability through advanced study and acquiring further qualifications in TESOL. This finding corroborates Neilsen (2009) who says that ELT workers must respond to global market forces in a highly competitive environment. St John (2011) similarly found that the teachers

interviewed in her study said that the reason they pursued advanced degrees in TESOL was to get better-paying jobs, particularly in Gulf countries.

## **6.5 Choice as discourse**

In my discussion of work experience (see above), I explain how from a poststructural perspective SIE faculty as subjects engage with dominant discourses from within the discourses. A poststructural view encourages an understanding of how the Foucauldian concept of *epistemes* (Crotty, 1998) produces reality. In this section I explain how we might view opportunities for SIE faculty from within the discourses of power.

Following Binkley (2009, p. 62), I am suggesting that by obtaining added qualifications, SIE faculty were investing in themselves through “micro-technologies”, described in chapter 3 as methods individuals use to govern themselves. I am suggesting that Lyotard’s phrase, the “mercantilization of knowledge” (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009, p. 35), where knowledge is understood as a commodity, applies to the manner in which SIE faculty sought to improve, upgrade, and seek advanced ESL teaching qualifications. Lyotard argued that knowledge becomes systemic when it has “meaning only insofar as it will be operational” (Malik, 2005). There was a means to an end for SIE faculty obtaining higher qualifications, i.e. to make themselves more saleable in the ESL job market. The system also includes the increasing demand and availability of ESL teaching jobs (for ESL professionals who had the qualifications).

Now positioned as market agents, as defined by neoliberal economic rationality, SIE faculty were encouraged to cultivate themselves as autonomous individuals. Interviewees shared their stories of vulnerability as teachers in the stories of teaching in home countries. Push factors are narrated in stories of escape, so the data as discourse becomes the context for “care of the self” (Haug and Reid, 2017). According to Foucault (Brady, 2014) care of the self is concerned with the individual’s striving for a certain state of happiness. It is based on Foucault’s



later work, on governmentality involving autonomous practice, the idea that individuals as entrepreneurs of themselves, take care of themselves in a way that would increase their human capital (Fridman, 2014). Scholars differ as to the relationship of care of the self and technologies of domination (Haug and Reid, 2017; Brady 2014). I am basing my analysis on Heyes' (2006, p.141) definition, that care of the self is a way to invent ourselves as something not yet imagined. Here I am suggesting that a life turning point (Denzin, 1989) is a choice that SIE faculty make and therefore a disciplinary technology that needs to be understood in the light of the told stories of escape. In an age of global work flows, expatriation is part of a political and economic rationality. The quote that launches this section indicates how liberal economics positions people and in some sense reflects SIE faculty position in relation to the discourse of choice. There is a clear call towards self-monitoring as a path towards obtaining power as a goal. SIE faculty choices are shaped and informed by this normalizing power. The question of what is power for the neo-liberal subject centers around the question of what does s/he control? In the light of this concept of choice represented as power, my contention is that we need to be skeptical of how things come to present themselves as our own desires and decisions. Expatriation becomes available as technology of choice through political and economic market forces which create demand for ESL teachers and enabled the interviewees in this study to travel to 28 countries to get employment.

The fact that ESL educators work in the UAE because of higher salaries and greater financial benefits, appears with regularity in the research literature. Research studies have shown that ESL teachers in the UAE place high value on financial gain. It has been noted that "high salary is a pull factor" (Richardson and McKenna, 2002, p. 71) in the motivations of expatriates. It was found that teachers were not stressed by compensation and benefits "due to the lack of problems related to compensation teachers have in the UAE" (Aubrey, 2014, p. 70) and compensation was found to be one of the benefits for ESL teachers to remain in the UAE (Schoepp, 2011, p. 68). The discourse around economic gain in the UAE comparative to other countries is noted as favourable because

“employees do not pay taxes” (Chapman et al 2014, p.142). ESL teachers have been associated with the metaphor of “mercenary”, citing finances as the driver to expatriate (Richardson and McKenna, 2002, p.71). The number of research studies that are noted here shows that economic gain is indeed a powerful discourse, since it is a recurring theme in ESL studies.

While these studies focus on micro-level capabilities (Doherty, 2013) such as instructor motivation (Chapman et al, 2014), occupational stress and coping in EFL teachers (Aubrey, 2014) or the professional identities of EFL teachers (MacLeod, 2013), my study looks at the broader political and socio-economic discourses impacting the participants in my study. According to Foucault, a discourse exists in relation to its anterior position to another discourse (Bacchi and Bonham, 2014). In my study I want to show how the discourse around remuneration in teaching sets conditions for SIE faculty subjectivity and consequently leads researchers to position them as “mercenary” (Richardson and McKenna, 2002, Neilsen, 2009). Just as researchers have recognized economic discourse for ESL teachers, they have also described the profession of ESL teacher as “low status” (Neilsen, 2009, Troudi, 2009, St John, 2011) and that ESL teachers are “disempowered and marginalized” (Johnston, 1999). These descriptions appear with regularity in research on ESL teaching, often coupled with the addition that it is also poorly paid (Berry, 1986; De Long, 1987; Fessler and Christensen, 1992; Troudi, 2006; Neilsen, 2009). In my study, the discourse analysis approach to the data has shown that each participant has an individual story around compensation. In chapter 5 (*Stories of remuneration in teaching and economic gain*) each participant’s story about why they came to the UAE, touches on the participant’s need to have a better paying job, in a sense, the pull factors, but also a statement about the economic discourse that exists around language teaching as not well paid.

I also described the push factors in “*discursive constructs of teaching in home countries*” (chapter 5). To relate these findings to my theoretical framework in chapter 3, I examined the neoliberal theory of governmentality, the ideology that

encourages individuals to invest in themselves (Read, 2009). The stories of remuneration reproduced in chapter 5 illustrate the amalgam of economics and education and how SIE faculty are positioned in this complex form of power. While researchers have noted financial benefit in their studies (Richardson and McKenna, 2002; Neilsen, 2009), my study ventures to show how the discourse around dirham as capital gain for SIE faculty is in fact part of a cluster of other discourses that prescribe the lifeworlds of SIE faculty. While MacLeod (2013, p. 177) observed that his research participants took on the “personae” of “globalised units of labour” in their “search of employment”, my study, with its focus on lifeworld narrative, explains the subjectivity of *homo oeconomicus* (Brown, 2015) as part of governmentality of SIE faculty. As I explained in the literature review, the logic of neoliberal governmentality encourages individuals to become “enterprising selves” (Binkley, 2007, p. 64).

The *stories of remuneration*, the stories contained in *discursive constructs of teaching in home countries* and the *stories of extended temporary stay* can be seen in the context of how SIE faculty secured dirham capital to ameliorate their subject positions in the economic discourse of ESL teaching and take on the neoliberal mindset of becoming “adept at fostering entrepreneurial and self-responsible capabilities (Fridman, 2014, p. 92).

## **6.6 Othering and the experience of being othered**

From the findings in relation to othering in my study, themes of positive valuation of western other, vulnerability around gender issues in the workplace and society, and perceptions of nonnative English teachers emerged from the analysis. In the findings, the stories of othering and being othered bring up a number of discourses. One discourse is that of marginalization of women as foreign in host locations, and gender discrimination in workplaces and local society. SIE faculty who were positioned in these discourses reveal how they were vulnerable as a result of these subject positions. While my study is not particularly focused on SIE women’s experiences of discrimination, like Stalker

and Mavin's (2011) study, the findings are worth mentioning for their similarity. They found that their sample of SIE women in senior management, living and working in the UAE, felt a heightened sense of vulnerability due to the fact that they were not company sponsored and were not able to draw on organizational support to deal with discrimination. Similarly, Janet, Soyal and Estee position themselves as vulnerable in the social contexts that marginalized their gender.

TEFL researchers have found that othering occurs in different forms. MacLeod (2013, p. 90) found that his interviewees, TEFL teachers of "western Anglo-European ethnic groups", held a cultural bias towards their Emirati students, essentially, devaluing their students and the local culture. Neilsen (2009, p. 109-116) had a similar sample of TEFL teachers. He reports that half of his respondents were "seeking the experience of being othered". He adds that they "embraced the sense of otherness and sought extremes of cultural difference". His interviewees reported positive experiences of othering through their efforts of learning local languages and seeking greater involvement in the host culture.

The SIE faculty interviewed for my study have lived and worked in one or more cultures that were foreign to them, and their experiences have been varied. The experiences of othering reported by interviewees offers perspectives from both the negative sense that is often applied, as well as how some interviewees were afforded special treatment due to their otherness. My study shows the variability and range that SIE faculty can experience. James and Janet have experienced othering in a way that their otherness was valued and sought after. Their experience can be seen in the light of Holliday's (2005) observation that the native-speaking part of the TESOL world is in a somewhat privileged position. Neilsen (2009, p. 111) also found that most of his interviewees fit the stereotype of the desired English teacher. They were "Caucasian, middle-class, university-educated". Some interviewees in my study (Janet, Soyal and Estee) relate their experiences of othering from the perspective of unresolved tension where their subjectivity was not negotiated. The different discourses of othering reflected in

these stories indicate how the interviewees were positioned in broader socio-political contexts of power.

Demi and Soyal's stories of being marginalized due to their non-native speaker status reflects Syed's (2003) comment that differential treatment based on native speaker status and nationality is an issue for EFL teachers in the Gulf.

In the analysis of stories of othering I am arguing that it is the socio-cultural context that provides SIE faculty with affordances, opportunities or the absence of either. SIE faculty (James, Janet) were glorified, suggesting that the privilege afforded to native speakers (Mahboob, 2010) was a discourse of the socio-cultural context. Janet, Soyal and Estee were marginalized as women in certain socio-cultural contexts. By highlighting the discourses of othering that SIE faculty encounter, TEFL professionals are made aware of the subject positions they are often afforded in host cultures.

## **6.7 Lifeworlds intersecting history**

Narrative researchers such as Vásquez (2011, p.542) distinguish between "researcher-elicited big stories" and "small stories" which are narratives produced during research interviews. In chapter 5, the stories of personal history traversing socio-political change, were unelicited small stories, captured in the flow of some ongoing conversational activity. Narrative researchers have different terms for the kinds of stories represented here. The six stories that are retold are what Schegloff (1997, p. 103) considers "subsequent stories", i.e. when a story launches off into another story. These are stories that "serve as displays of understanding" and can be seen to align with prior stories. Ultimately, they are relevant as stories of personal experience. As part of their life-world retelling, these stories represent "critical incidents" or "turning points" (Germeten 2013, p. 613), which can be short or long, small or lasting. Barkhuizen (2011, p. 392) similarly talks about his own experience with narrative research where his research participants told stories that formed, "coherent entities embedded

within” the interview discourse. He refers to these as “smaller narratives” and says that they were “relatively separate to the surrounding interview discourse”.

According to Burr (2003), Foucault theorized that where there is power there is also resistance. Interviewee stories of world events impacting them illustrate how interviewees developed new forms of subjectivity. Soyal, Demi, Estee and Sami Ali used the socio-political circumstances they were exposed to as “active practices of self-formation” (Tamboukou, 2008, p.7). The discourse analysis shows how the interviewees formed new subjectivities as a direct result of socio-political circumstances that formed part of their life-worlds. Soyal, for example, used the difficult circumstances of living in occupied territory to advance her study of English. Demi used the political turmoil of the break-up of the USSR to find a way to study in the US. Estee took advantage of educational reforms in South Africa to leave mainstream teaching. Sami Ali felt that his knowledge of English was advantageous as a result of being a refugee in the US. The stories as narrated by these four interviewees are really precursors to their lives as SIE faculty, but they are relevant in as far as they represent turning points in their life worlds that demonstrate how agency develops as a result of being caught in competing discourses. My understanding of the stories by my research participants, Estee, Demi, Soyal and Sami Ali, is that the turning points in their life worlds eventually had outcomes for their development as ESL teachers and therefore were relevant in terms of narrative continuity. These stories are historically relevant for how they pave the way forward in how subjectivities of SIE faculty are influenced.

## **6.8 Implications of findings**

My research responds to calls for further research on SIEs and focusses in particular on SIE faculty. It is therefore important for the theory development of who SIEs are and what they experience during long-term self-expatriation. I am studying expatriation as a cultural phenomenon. Moreover, as a student of social science, I am offering insights into the roles neoliberal governmentality makes

available to SIE faculty. In the next section I look at a new way of defining expatriation and in particular, what it may mean in the context of TEFL.

### **6.8.1 Changing subjectivities and expatriation**

*“Neoliberalism is a loose and shifting signifier”*

***Brown, 2015***

The findings show that SIE faculty subjectivity is multi-positioned. The data showed that the SIE faculty interviewed for this study were either expatriates who left their home countries, moved to the UAE and stayed for more than 10 years, or serial expatriates.

In the data analysis I tracked the changing subjectivity of each interviewee through their years as expatriates. As they tell their stories, their subject positions come to the fore as I inquire about the reason they decide to either renew a teaching contract or relocate. What became apparent was that the decision to expatriate happened several times in the lives of SIE faculty. All eight interviewees expatriated multiple times, this is because the data shows that their changing subjectivities brought with it different reasons for expatriating. By recognizing that subjectivity is dynamic, I want to suggest that when we read the research question, how do SIE faculty frame their experience prior to expatriation, in the context of the data findings, expatriation as a singular act has no meaning. The changing subjectivities of SIE faculty would generate other critical moments based on their changing needs, thereby changing their motivations and expectations for relocating again. By applying theories of subjectivity to SIE faculty, by considering neoliberal market influences in the choices SIE faculty make, I want to suggest a new way of imagining expatriation of SIE faculty. Firstly, expatriation and subjectivity are linked to the extent that different subjectivities require different technologies. The three kinds of expatriation I suggest below represent three kinds of technologies that would

amount to care of the self at different turning points. Secondly, we need to understand the role of imagination with each phase of expatriation. Each turning point was accompanied by a need to imagine a future. Reid (Haug and Reid, 2017, p.254) applies Foucauldian analysis to his work and has been described as “push[ing] the borders of how we think and create a healthy and justifiable human subjectivity”. He describes the role of images as things which human beings need to change the nature of their political and social circumstances. By applying this description, we may read in the stories of escape, strategies to survive. SIE faculty were attempting to care for themselves in the face of trauma.

### **6.8.2 Reimagining expatriation**

In this section I look at expatriation as neoliberal technology in an age of globalization. The SIE faculty in this study have lived outside their home countries for most of their working lives and have effectively engaged in three kinds of expatriation. The first is impetus expatriation. This is followed by envision expatriation and anchor expatriation. All three phases are conditioned by SIE faculty responding to market forces and consequently fashioning themselves as market actors.

### **6.8.3 Impetus expatriation**

In the findings I explain how each of the eight interviewees made the decision to leave their home countries. This decision represented a break from the known and a critical moment in their changing subjectivities. Each interviewee found opportunity to expatriate. The impetus to relocate could be the opportunity for travel and novel experience (Sami Ali, Estee, Jack and Janet.) The impetus could also be a need to get away from a difficult life or work situation (Soyal, Demi and James.) We see that in the stories of escape, impetus expatriation becomes a survival strategy. By seeking to escape challenging situations in their homelands, SIE faculty were attempting to care for themselves. Foucauldian



scholars refer to care of the self as finding ways of living by adopting disciplinary practices that would lead to “a broader repertoire of human possibilities” (Heyes, 2006, p. 138). This study has shown that one of the characteristics of impetus expatriation is the knowledge that TEFL presents possibility for changing life circumstances. In the life world of the interviewee, moving countries is less about risk and more about opportunity. Impetus expatriation is made possible through global economic processes. It is a neoliberal technology for SIE faculty and is defined by a turning point towards care of the self. The need for self-care becomes evident in interviewee stories of teaching in their home countries.

Analysis of the data has given a detailed presentation of motivations during the impetus expatriation phase. My theory is based on the evidence I have presented that subjectivities change and therefore motivations change. My analysis of the three kinds of expatriation for long term SIE faculty provides insights into what factors contribute towards changing subjectivities. In the next two sections I provide further analysis of the complex interplay of factors influencing SIE faculty as *homo economicus*

#### **6.8.4 Envision expatriation**

While I think that impetus expatriation is really the first expatriate move, subsequent expatriate moves, could be in the same country, or it could be to a different place altogether. My reading from the data tells me that when SIE faculty renew their work visas and renew their work contracts, they have reimagined their lives, based on their experiences of their impetus expatriation. After the first experience of expatriation, Medo, Sami Ali and Soyal believed that renewing their contracts or resigning and finding other TEFL jobs in the UAE could help them fulfil personal and professional goals. Sami Ali envisioned a satisfying work environment. Soyal describes her complete enjoyment of the institution she eventually found a job in and decided that she would stay. Medo envisioned having the means to fund his personal and professional life goals.

With Demi's second expatriate move which was to the UAE, he envisioned an end to the dissatisfaction he felt with his professional status in Taiwan.

SIE faculty interviews show that with experience of living in host locations, their "global mobility orientation" (Lauring and Selmer, 2014, p.524) develops. The reader may recall that James no longer saw any value in continuing his teaching job in rural England. With all his opportunities to teach in Europe, he developed a perspective of himself in foreign societies where he observed how people lived and perceived differently. As I have stated earlier, global mobility orientation needs to be seen, not necessarily as an undisputed feature of personality, but rather as the effect of other parts of the world becoming available to SIE faculty through economic rationality, which encourages the creation of neoliberal subjects. Jack presents another perspective of how global mobility orientation influences serial expatriates. It can have the effect of making overseas destinations seem more appealing. Jack, for example, describes himself as experiencing difficulty settling in to the UK after living in Gaza for two years.

Estee, also, a serial expatriate, shows how a global mobility orientation can rescue the SIE from adverse situations in the host country. When Estee tells her story of experiencing discrimination as a woman in a south east Asian country, her conclusion that, "...*you have to accommodate that. You have to realise that it's part of their culture*", would suggest that although the dominating discourse positioned her in a particular subjectivity, by taking on the perspective that global mobility orientation afforded her, she takes on an alternative subjectivity.

Another feature of envision expatriation is that SIE faculty saw the benefits of advanced study to increase their sellability in the TEFL job market. SIE faculty incorporate this economic rationality through their efforts, i.e. "micro-technologies" (Binkley, 2009, p. 62). As market actors, SIE faculty see the benefit to be gained by having further teaching qualifications to give them an economic advantage. The table in chapter 4 provides details of each interviewees' qualifications as TEFL instructors. Estee's biographic detail in chapter 5 explains how she built up her list of qualifications with successive

expatriate moves in countries in south east Asia. Further study was not a feature of Sami Ali's envision expatriate phase. He already had a PhD when he came to the UAE. The culture suited him and created the environment he wanted for his family. However, Sami Ali did not go directly from impetus expatriate to anchor expatriate. His envision phase was characterized by his family's enjoyment of and adapting to life in the culture of the UAE. He maintained ties with his job in the US for three years, before making the turning point decision to remain in the UAE.

### **6.8.5 Anchor expatriation**

In the stories of teaching in home countries and stories of extended temporary stay, we see technologies of power (institutional discourses, educational discourses, professional discourses) and technologies of the self, engaged in a complex interplay. Anchor expatriation creates a new imaginery of the self for SIE faculty.

In this section I describe the relationship between long term stay in one country, in this case, the UAE and entrenching *homo economicus* (Brown, 2015) as a particular form of subjectivity in anchor expatriates. Here I am explaining how SIE faculty who have spent most of their working lives abroad made choices in favour of expatriation over and over. The kinds of expatriation are reflective of changing subjectivities, responding to the social structures of where SIE faculty find themselves personally, economically and politically. Impetus expatriation and envision expatriation are directed forms of action, intended to satisfy motivations for going overseas and then subsequently expanding these initial opportunities, through envisioning their aspirations in the expatriate location. Anchor expatriation describes the phenomenon of SIE faculty who have extended temporary stays in the UAE. Interviewees spoke about stories of discontent (chapter 5, 5.8.2) and stories of othering (chapter 5, 5.12) in their anchor expatriate location of the UAE. They spoke about feeling alienated by the educational discourse (Demi), or complying with it (James), their subject

status in relation to professional discourse (Janet) and their subject status as bilingual teachers (Demi, Soyul). The stories of extended temporary stay show that trade-off is a feature of anchor expatriation. For Demi salary is key, Jack implies that his advanced age is a consideration, Janet needed the benefits her teaching job provided her with. Other anchor expatriates like Sami Ali is content with living in the UAE (chapter 5, 9.3).

Anchor expatriates like Janet who eventually leave their expatriate location face a precarious situation. She described her state of mind as, “feeling VERY nervous” as her departure date, after living in the UAE for 15 years, drew close. Janet’s response reflects Brown’s (2015, p.32) caution about how neoliberalism’s creation of market actors can place them in a state of vulnerability:

*“We have no guarantee of security, protection, or even survival. A subject construed and constructed as human capital both for itself and for a firm or state is at persistent risk of failure, redundancy and abandonment through no doing of its own, regardless of how savvy and responsible it is.”*

Anchor expatriates live in expatriate locations for long periods of time, often motivated by the compulsion as market actors to act for economic reasons. Demi, who has lived in the UAE for more than 8 years, makes a candid confession when he says that he would prefer to repatriate, but financially he cannot because the job he would get back in his home, the Ukraine, would be insufficient to provide for his family.

Anchor expatriation has no clear start or finishing point. From the perspective of cultural narrative, it represents change through time. Changing subjectivities signify how SIE faculty change through time. For the interviewees, repatriating is an awareness they carry with them throughout all versions of their expatriation decisions.

Doherty (2013) suggested that more research into how the initial motivations of SIEs play out is needed. I believe that a qualitative study of this nature has given some insight into how motivations change as a result of changing subjectivities.

## **CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this research was to use narrative research to explore the life world experiences of expatriate ESL teachers who have spent most of their lives working in host locations. The eight SIE faculty who participated in this study have spent most of their ELT professional lives in countries other than their homeland. This section will briefly summarize the main findings of the research and consider the implications of the study. It will make recommendations for future research.

### **7.1 Summary of findings**

Globalization has created opportunities for ELT professionals. They are offered opportunities as SIE faculty and this role has value in as far as they can facilitate socio-economic and political aims of nations to modernize through ELT programs. The subject status of SIE faculty is shaped by educational institutions which employ them and how these institutions define their professional roles. These discourses conflict with teachers' own beliefs about language teaching and their professional roles.

One of the most significant findings of the study is that the self-initiated expatriate teacher is a market actor, as defined by neoliberal economic design. SIE faculty take up neoliberal governmentality as a response to push or pull factors they experience in their home countries. On 14 March 1979, in a lecture on American neo-liberalism at the College of France, Foucault (Foucault and Senellart, 2008, p.230) stated:

“Migration is an investment; the migrant is an investor. He is an entrepreneur of himself who incurs expenses by investing to obtain some kind of improvement.”

Although Foucault was talking about mobility as an element in human capital and not about the phenomenon of expatriation, per sé, the poignancy of these words in relation to this study on SIE faculty has specific resonance 40 years after he made this analysis of “individual enterprise” (ibid).

In another sense, investment in human capital is also seen in the efforts of the UAE leadership in relation to their subjects. Foucault (Foucault and Senellart, 2008) stated that not only economic policies of developed countries (by which he meant, western and Japanese), but also social, cultural and economic policies were oriented in terms of investing in human capital. I have suggested that neo-liberal influences are prevalent in the UAE, a country supposedly not associated with a western ethos, but social, cultural and educational policies are also oriented towards human capital. The leadership is focused on Emiratization, inculcating a knowledge economy, and striving for global competitiveness in the economy. These policies require the hired expertise and skills of expatriates, individuals who have used mobility as an investment in their human capital.

## **7.2 Summary of research question 1**

*“...he helps me to see the framings I use to frame things”*

***Patti Lather on Foucault, 2015***

Lather’s quote was the inspiration behind my first research question: How do SIE faculty frame their experience prior to expatriation? How does this framing impact their experience in host countries? The key findings with regard to research question 1 seem to fall into three related areas. The first concerns SIE motivations for leaving their home country. I have described their accounts as stories of leaving and stories of escape. In contrast to published research on SIEs, I am veering away from psychological reasoning to explain self-initiated expatriation of ESL teachers. I have suggested that in the global context, free market economies make the conditions or options for leaving or escape viable. By applying discourse analysis to data, I have illustrated that SIE faculty are discursively situated in discourses that impact their lives and subsequent

choices. Luring and Selmer (2014) refer to global mobility orientation in terms of mindset and innate psychological tendencies. My finding is that global mobility orientation is better understood as relative experience. This is illustrated in the second group of findings. The SIE faculty in my study spoke about their positive experiences relative to what was valuable to them as social good in the context of achieving their own educational or professional aims.

The second group of findings have to do with what SIE faculty experienced in their host locations. The data in this section focusses on how SIE faculty function in countries that are foreign to them. Stories of job satisfaction were compiled from a number of countries that SIE faculty worked in. Applying discourse analysis to the data showed that job satisfaction relates to favourable outcomes of educational and professional discourses as practiced or experienced by English language teachers. Data analysis showed what SIE faculty regarded as favourable outcomes of education practice. Interviewees described their job satisfaction in terms of teaching discourse.

The group of findings related to stories of discontent showed how SIE faculty were challenged in their positioning by institutional, professional and educational discourses. In stories of discontent interviewees reconstructed narrative accounts of tensions between carrying out roles the educational institution deemed appropriate and a sense of themselves as professional educators. In response to my interviewer question, "Can you think back to a time in your professional experience that might have been challenging?" - the stories in this section commonly referred to occupational discourses in the UAE. This could be attributed to the fact that interviewees may have been recalling their most recent expatriate location. In chapter 5 I referred to Doherty (2013) who suggests that research needs to be directed towards SIE contribution at a collective level as necessary for understanding the impact of SIEs in the workplace. My findings on how SIE faculty discursively represent host locations diversifies the suggestion. The stories allow insights into the successes and troubled subject positions interviewees narrate about occupational discourses. In response to

Doherty's (2013) suggestion, it is an answer from those within the workplace and explains the impact of the workplace on SIE faculty.

The third key finding linked the impact of expatriate locations to the financial aspect of language teaching. The considerable pull factor of economic gain in UAE educational institutions neutralized desires to repatriate (Medo, Demi, Jack, Soyol, Janet). The felt effects of economic pressures on teaching in home countries were narrated in stories of remuneration. Medo, Estee, Janet and Soyol described the challenges of teaching in their home countries relative to overseas locations. The complexity of push/pull factors meant that five of the eight interviewees became serial expatriates over the course of their careers. In the implications I elaborated on how financial effects of ELT contribute to SIE choices and how expatriation as experienced by long-term SIE faculty can be framed as an economic and cultural phenomenon.

### **7.3 Summary of research question 2**

*"The self, it is obvious, or it should be obvious at least, is an imaginary construct. We talk about it, discuss it, call it forth, as if it were real"*

***Haug and Reid (2017)***

To answer my second research question: How have SIE faculty produced their agency within the socio-political milieux of their experience? I draw upon Foucault's notion of power as relation, or power as dynamic. Reid's (2017) quote (see above) extends Foucault's (1982) conviction that a subject does not exist. It is constituted through practices of subjection or through practices of liberation and freedom. The findings showed areas of overlap between the research questions. The first key area, competing discourses, is a description of the narrative sources already mentioned in relation to research question one. I have suggested that representing findings as binary would be better served viewed from a poststructural perspective of viewing the impact that powerful discourses have on SIE faculty experience.



The interviewees formed new subjectivities as a direct result of socio-political circumstances that formed part of their life-worlds. The stories of personal encounters during historical events of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century showed that these events were in some cases instrumental in the career paths that would become available to the interviewees. In other cases, socio-political conflict facilitated job opportunities in ESL. All of the participants who spoke of an historic event they lived through could relate to how it impacted their lives directly.

## **7.4 Significance of the study**

The UAE has a goal to balance the mix between expatriates and nationals by 2021. In order to do this the nation requires a competent and bilingual national workforce to carry out the ambitious expansion goals of the country's leaders. Mukerji and Jammel (2008) state that in the GCC, higher education institutions have "quality teaching staff" to "prepare the ground for quality in higher education". However, the latest report by the British Council UAE Future Skills Report (2018), which outlines the gaps that exist in Emirati youth to take up jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has sparked some debate around the "inefficiency" of the foundation year to improve the English skills of Emirati students to enter Bachelor programs (*The Business Breakfast*, 2018). In addition to this criticism, the "quality of teachers" was brought into question. As all of the SIE faculty interviewed for this research study teach in foundation programs, they and several other ESL teachers like us, come under scrutiny in the light of this report.

A study such as this one shows how practices and institutional norms are received and carried out. Education planners could use research studies like this to look for ways to engage faculty who are directly involved with curriculum, classroom and institutional practices to make informed changes towards Emiratization. Moreover, SIE faculty are one component of the key players in foundation year programs. It can be argued that there is a need to have some insight into their subjectivity and how they are positioned in relation to competing

discourses that impact them in their personal and working lives. However, transparency about institutional efficacy in the UAE is still highly contentious.

The findings of this study offer broader implications for tertiary institutions in countries that rely on SIE faculty. South East Asia, for example is a region that is expanding its need for EFL to further its economic goals (Pitsuwan, 2014). A study of this nature provides insight into the professional and institutional issues faced by the faculty they hire. A future direction to advance research on SIE faculty could be further exploration of SIE faculty in the different stages of expatriation. This direction would manage expatriate EFL teacher expectations with the needs of a national educational policy.

The study could inform teacher educators and managers about the life worlds of SIE faculty. Expatriate EFL teachers could recognize how and in what ways they will need support and professional development that takes into consideration challenges in the workplace. For researchers interested in the expatriate workforce, my study extends the knowledge base of self-initiated expatriates. Moreover, this study offers scholars interested in governmentality studies a perspective on how SIE faculty are constituted as neo-liberal subjects and the processes of becoming an entrepreneur of oneself in the global industry of ESL.

## **7.5 Contribution to knowledge**

There are five main ways this qualitative study has contributed to research.

Firstly, I believe that what I have done is add to the theoretical discussion on neoliberal governmentality by analysing how expatriate teachers are neo-liberal subjects. Studies that focus on psychology see self-initiated expatriation primarily as a personal decision. I am looking at another way we can talk about the relationship between self and society. What I am saying is that decisions to expatriate, and then to stay needs to be seen from the socio-political and economic context that the SIE teacher finds him/herself in. I see the expatriate self as evolving and changing direction in one lifetime.

Secondly, this study is original in that I present a theoretical understanding of how neoliberalism impacts the lives of expatriate teachers. I have made a link between Foucault's governmentality theory and how care of the self applies to self-initiated expatriate English language teachers. I have suggested that serial expatriation is a technology of the self. This is how English language teachers take up opportunities that the market represents. If my colleagues were to read this they might be conscientized to what has power over us and how that has shaped our life choices. I have made a definitive link between neoliberal governmentality and self-initiated expatriate faculty.

Thirdly, I think I have created synergy between the research on self-initiated expatriates and research on English language teachers. I have added to the body of research on self-initiated expatriates. When I was gathering research I found few publications on English teachers as SIE. We are not just language teachers, we are expatriate language teachers, we are not just expatriate language teachers, we are self-initiated expatriate English language teachers. And each of those labels adds to the complexity of who SIE faculty are. So we have something to add to that research field.

The fourth way this study contributes to knowledge is in my efforts to represent a more nuanced interpretation of what I think expatriation is. It is more than just one word, one kind of action. When I think of myself as a student of social science I have presented expatriation as a cultural phenomenon. As a neoliberal technology, it is a layered process. And I have unpacked what goes on in that process. I have suggested that each kind of expatriation is a response to neoliberal influence. When I think of where does my work fit in in the discipline of social science, what I want to suggest is that in our world today there is this cultural phenomenon of expatriation and it is worth studying in its own right.

The fifth way this study contributes to knowledge is in its methodology. Methodologically it is original because I have used discourse analysis to add a hermeneutic perspective to understanding the life-world of language teachers. I found James Paul Gee's website and wrote to ask him why he chose not to put

his building blocks and tools of inquiry into a diagram. Because when I read the theory, I saw how it could lend itself to being encapsulated for easier use and understanding. He replied saying he never thought about it, but it would be a good idea, so I built on that conversation. I have taken James Paul Gee's discourse theory, and diagrammized his building tasks and tools of inquiry. There is a copy of how I organized the content in the Appendix. My findings chapter shows how one might use the building blocks of language and the tools of inquiry. This I am sure could serve as a guide to other qualitative researchers with and interest in language analysis as a methodological tool.

## **7.6 Limitations and scope for future research**

My analysis suggests that SIE faculty discourse is a manifestation of neoliberal governmentality that emphasizes individual responsibility for career and professional advancement. A study of this nature conscientizes SIE faculty to the prevalence of neoliberal rationality as instrumental in their lives. A way forward would be to engage SIE faculty around issues of job security, personal economic well-being and career progression in an age of global workflows and self-reliance. Another direction for further study would be to research SIE faculty post anchor expatriation, evaluating the extent of successful repatriation or other courses of action. This study is limited to a narrative understanding of the life-worlds of EFL teachers who have spent most of their working lives as expatriates. The focus is on how macro social discourses impact their lives, choices and experiences. The study is modest in scope, limited to a small number of EFL teachers in the UAE, and limited to the data that they alone provide. It would have been helpful to explore ELT contexts in more depth. A wider research area could have included how developed and developing countries institutionalize and operationalize ELT as industry and/or ELT in the state sector

## 7.6 Final thoughts

*“personal stories often operate as bids for representation from the disenfranchised”*  
(Squire, 2008)

Researchers have stated that ESL teachers are “marginalized” (Johnston, 1999, p. 257), that their profession has “low status” (Troudi, 2009, p. 61), and that their low status is the reason why “little has been published on the experiences of teachers living and working abroad” (St John, 2011, p. 149). Furthermore, Mahboob (2010) says that NNESTS are subjected to discriminatory hiring practices. My hope is that this study illustrates what these weighted descriptions mean in the context of lived world experiences of the eight expatriate language teachers who participated in this study. Narratives belong neither to the protagonist of the story, nor the narrator. Narratives have an intent to produce. My research questions reflect my intention to produce political argument by exposing the socio-economic tensions that contextualize my generation of individuals who made careers out of teaching ESL and crossed geographical boundaries to do so. I concede, as Squire, et al (2008) point out, that I will not know what the effect of what I do does. I have turned to my community; my community of TEFL teachers, their told stories are in my trust. I offer them representation.

## Reflections

A thesis happens against the backdrop of life. During these EdD years, a significant relationship came to an end and my parents declined with old age and disease. With no cushioning of family and old friendships from home, these turning points in my own life brought home to me the full reckoning of my expatriate choices. As an SIE, I have also experienced how irrelevant geographical distance can be. I emailed Roderick Neilsen (2009) in Australia

and James Gee (2011) in the US, expressing my gratitude for putting out work that has supported my own scholarship. I have kept their replies from across the miles, their surprise that a grateful stranger (whom they will probably never meet), validated their years of hard work.

I have stayed in touch with six of the eight interviewees. Four continue to work in the UAE. Jack retired and Janet returned to the UK after many years of living abroad. Both have expressed regret about leaving the UAE. Jack, now in his 60s, has needed to find employment again and Janet has had some challenge to get an EFL job with adequate salary. Their latter stories could be voices of warning to be as entrepreneurial about safeguarding your post SIE life.

As a teacher I recognize when I descend into B-grade teaching, which happens more often than not when you are working full-time and studying part-time. So despite my own shortcomings, I am amazed at the good fortune I had to work with a master teacher, my supervisor, whose advice, direction and own research publications have served as cornerstones of my studentship.

I'm not sure when new neuro-pathways developed in my brain, possibly due to the years, months, several weeks and unquantifiable hours of study and solitary excess. Every effort an attempt to interact with the theory that often engaged me or otherwise mollified me. At the end of this thesis phase of my life, I perceive the world as shifting, constantly moving, uncertain, and yet I have a gravitas, a knowing voice that says, "I can do difficult things".

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Certificate of Ethical Approval

#### CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project: Between a rock and a hard place: expatriate teacher narratives of expectation and exasperation

Researcher(s) name: Shifa Desai

Supervisor(s) name: Salah Troudi

This project has been approved for the period

From: 17/04/2016

To: 30/9/2016

Ethics Committee approval reference:

D/15/16/42



Signature: (Dr Philip Durrant, Chair, Graduate School of Education Ethics Committee)

Date: 13/04/2016

## Appendix 2: Consent Form



### CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH

#### Title of Research Project

Between a rock and a hard place: expatriate teacher narratives of expectation and exasperation

#### Details of Project

I am an EdD student at the University of Exeter. I am working on my thesis. I am interested in learning about expat teachers who have lived and worked away from their home countries for many years. I would like to know why expats leave their countries for long periods of time. I am also interested in learning how expat teachers experience life in the countries they locate to and if they think the jobs they get as expat teachers are better or worse than the jobs they get in their home countries. I need to interview long-serving expat teachers who have lived in more than one country. I am interested in interviewing mature expat teachers, aged 45 and older.

#### Contact Details

Name: Shifa Desai

Postal address: 1626 Al Faseel Street Fujairah UAE.

Telephone +971 52 9191542

Email: sd380@exeter.ac.uk

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr Salah Troudi, Graduate School of Education, University of Exeter.

#### Consent

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.

I understand that:

- there is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project and, if I do choose to participate, I may withdraw at any stage;
- any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations;
- all information I give will be treated as confidential;
- the researcher(s) will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

.....  
(Signature of participant)

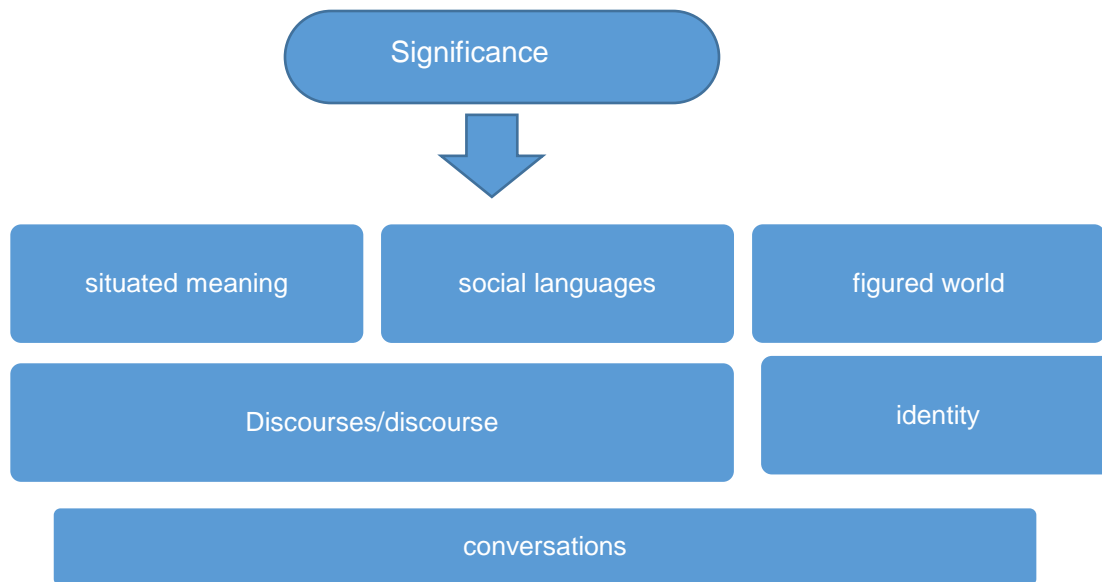
.....  
(Date)

.....  
(Printed name of participant)

### Appendix 3: Three-Column Transcript

Notes /discourse analysis	transcript	subjectivity
<p>1 how is this pc of language being used to make certain things significant?</p> <p>How does Interviewer react/relate to memory of war, childhood trauma?</p> <p>2 Detail retold almost objectively. Explaining to help me understand</p> <p>Good 1<sup>st</sup> person account of effects of the war This line doesn't sound right. Check again</p> <p>2. What practice is this piece of language being used to enact? How does he feel about this memory?</p>	<p><b>S:</b> I remember seeing Israeli paratroopers parachuting down from the air and down to the Dome of the Rock al Aqsa mosque area. And our house was looking at that place because it was on a hill. And I could see them coming down and I could see them shooting people as they were coming down. And then they occupied our areas. And I do remember stories of me going to my dad's store. He had a grocery store – sort of like a mini supermarket and I used to go there and have fun. But after that, after the Israelis came in and occupied the area, they confiscated it because we were living in an area called ... in Jerusalem there are four areas called quarters. One is the Muslim quarter, the Christian quarter, the Armenian quarter and the Jewish quarter. We happened to be living in the Jewish quarter. So that first quarter was the first place to be occupied. And the people who became refugees were the first ones to be kicked out of that area. Because they bore the name Jewish quarter. I do remember the old city of Jerusalem, walking down its tiny roads and going from my home to Al Aqsa mosque and Dome of the Rock to pray daily. I still remember that <i>in my face</i>. And now when I go back and visit, I go back as an American. I go and visit, not as a Palestinian. I see my home that turned into a museum. And I take my kids and every time we go there I tell them this is our house. And I still remember it because it had sort of an arch next to our house. And that place where the arch is ...you know... drilled into my head</p>	<p>Witness to war</p> <p>Happy childhood</p> <p>How he became a refugee</p> <p>Visitor in his homeland</p>

## Appendix 4: Building Tasks and Tools of Inquiry

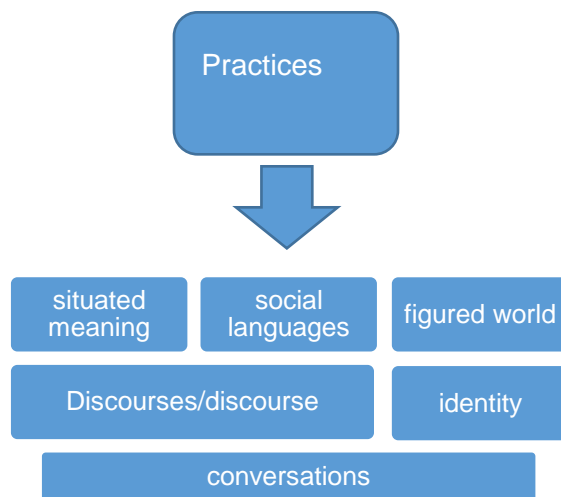


**Building Task 1: Significance.** How is this piece of language used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?

*How are:*

- A. situated meanings (an image that is assembled on the spot as we communicate in a given context. Words and phrases take on specific meaning in contexts of use)
- B. social languages (different styles or varieties of language for different purposes. They allow us to express different socially significant identities. Each social language has its own grammar.)
- C. figured worlds (Unconscious theories that people use to deal with the world). We use words based on stories, theories and models in our minds about what is normal or typical.
- D. intertextuality (cross-reference to another type of text. These are words other people have said or written.
- E. discourses (how language is used on site to enact activities and identities) and Discourses (we produce, reproduce, sustain a given form of life; ways of thinking, believing valuing; using tools, objects to enact a particular socially recognizable identity)
- F. “Conversations” (themes, debates, motifs that are the focus of much talk and writing in some social group with which we are familiar. They play a role in how language is interpreted.

*..... being used to build relevance or significance for things and people in context?*

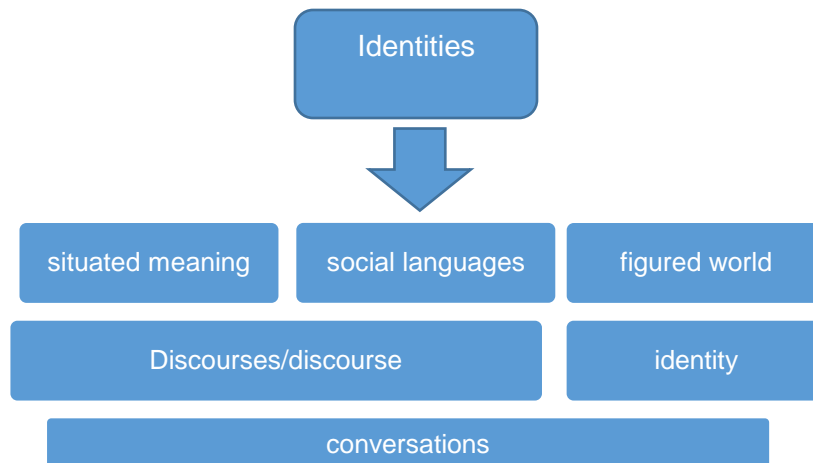


**Building Task 2: Practices/Activities.** What social practice is the speaker enacting in his/her language? eg. One talks and acts in one way when one is engaged in formally opening a meeting. Chit chat before the start of a meeting is another way to talk and act. What practice is this piece of language used to enact? How do people build practices?

*How are:*

- A. situated meanings (words and phrases take on specific meanings in contexts of use)
- B. social languages (What social languages are involved? What sorts of grammatical patterns indicate this?)
- C. figured worlds (What normally comes to mind when we think or talk about this concept/thing/piece of language? What is taken for granted?)
- D. intertextuality (How does intertextuality work in the text? In what way does the text borrow words from other oral or written sources?)
- E. Discourses (How is stuff other than language relevant in indicating socially situated identities and activities?)
- F. Conversations (What public debates are relevant to understanding this language and to what *Conversations* does it contribute?)

*.....being used to enact a practice in context?*



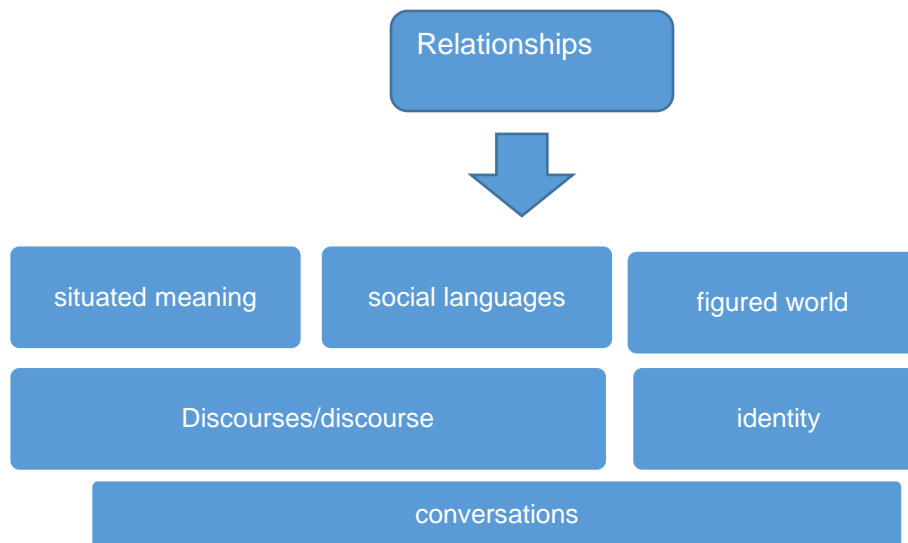
**Building Task 3: Identities.** We use language to get recognized as taking on a certain identity or role. We speak in such a way as to attribute a certain identity to others that we explicitly or implicitly compare to our own.

What identity/identities is this piece of language attributing to others? How does this help the speaker enact his/her own identity?

*How are:*

- A. situated meanings (words and phrases take on specific meanings in contexts of use)
- B. social languages (What social languages are involved? What sorts of grammatical patterns indicate this?)
- C. figured worlds (What normally comes to mind when we think or talk about this concept/thing/piece of language? What is taken for granted?)
- D. intertextuality (How does intertextuality work in the text? In what way does the text borrow words from other oral or written sources?)
- E. Discourses (How is stuff other than language relevant in indicating socially situated identities and activities?)
- F. Conversations (What public debates are relevant to understanding this language and to what *Conversations* does it contribute?)

*...being used to enact and depict identities?*

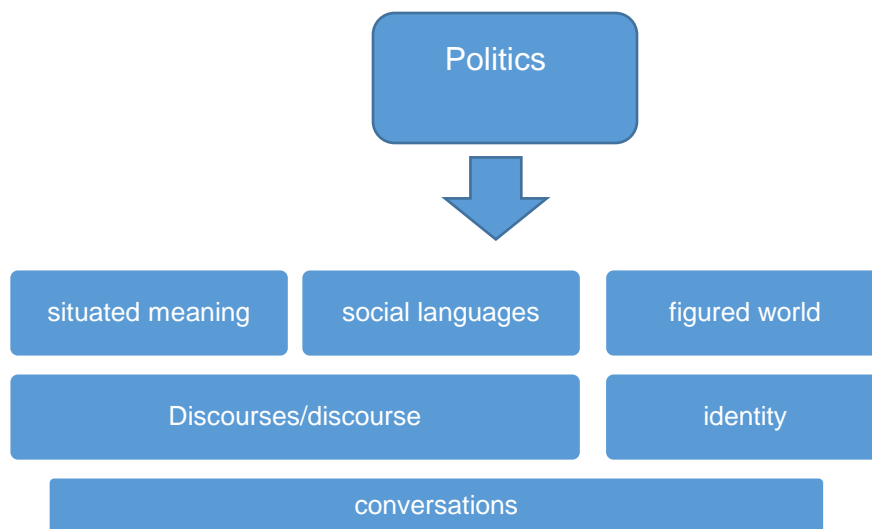


**Building Task 4: Relationships** What sort of relationship/s is this piece of language seeking to enact with others present or not?

*How are:*

- A. situated meanings (words and phrases take on specific meanings in contexts of use)
- B. social languages (What social languages are involved? What sorts of grammatical patterns indicate this?)
- C. figured worlds (What normally comes to mind when we think or talk about)
- D. Intertextuality ( How does intertextuality work in the text? In what way does the text borrow words from other oral or written sources?)
- E. Discourses (How is stuff other than language relevant in indicating socially situated identities and activities?)
- F. Conversations (What public debates are relevant to understanding this language and to what Conversations does it contribute?)

*....being used to build and sustain/ change and destroy social relationships?*



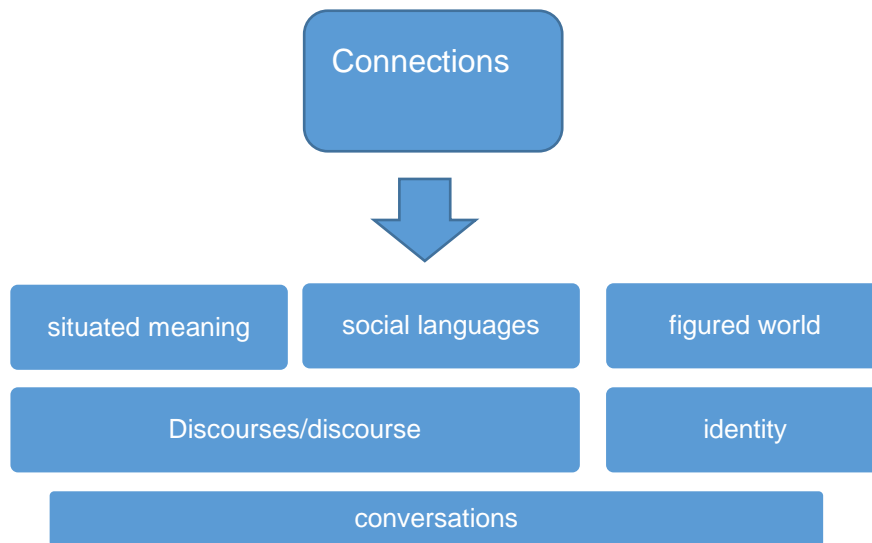
**Building Task 5: Politics.** Something or someone is adequate normal/proper/good /acceptable. What is being taken to be normal/right/high/low status?

*How are:*

- A. situated meanings (words and phrases take on specific meanings in contexts of use)
- B. social languages (What social languages are involved? What sorts of grammatical patterns indicate this?)
- C. figured worlds (What normally comes to mind when we think or talk about this concept/thing/piece of language? What is taken for granted?)
- D. intertextuality (How does intertextuality work in the text? In what way does the text borrow words from other oral or written sources?)
- E. Discourses (How is stuff other than language relevant in indicating socially situated identities and activities?)
- F. Conversations (What public debates are relevant to understanding this language and to what *Conversations* does it contribute?)

*....being used to create/ distribute/withhold/construe distributions of social goods as acceptable or not?*



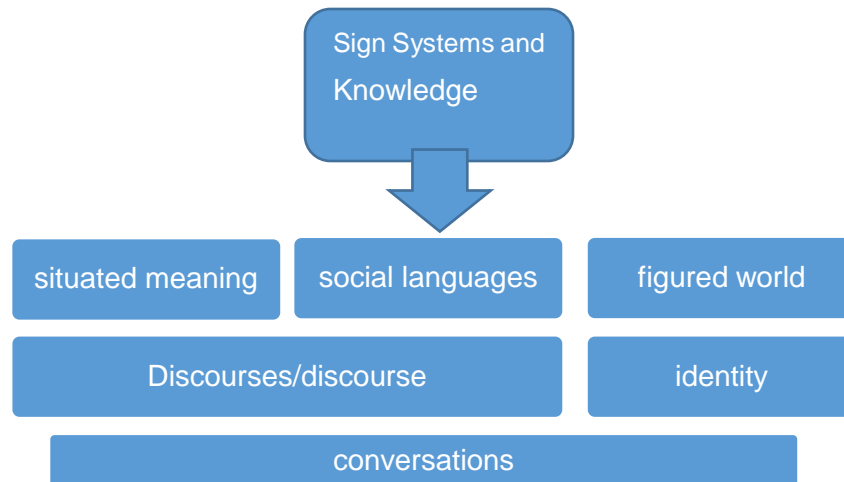


**Building Task 6:Connections** Things are connected/disconnected to other things. How does this piece of language connect/disconnect things? We look across the whole interview for themes that correlate with each other.

*How are:*

- A. situated meanings (words and phrases take on specific meanings in contexts of use)
- B. social languages (What social languages are involved? What sorts of grammatical patterns indicate this?)
- C. figured worlds (What normally comes to mind when we think or talk about this concept/thing/piece of language? What is taken for granted?)
- D. intertextuality (How does intertextuality work in the text? In what way does the text borrow words from other oral or written sources?)
- E. Discourses (How is stuff other than language relevant in indicating socially situated identities and activities?)
- F. Conversations (What public debates are relevant to understanding this language and to what *Conversations* does it contribute?)

*....being used to make things and people connected/disconnected/relevant /irrelevant?*



**Building Task 7: Sign Systems and Knowledge.** Languages, register, images. How does this piece of language privilege/or not specific sign systems?

*How are:*

- A. situated meanings (words and phrases take on specific meanings in contexts of use)
- B. social languages (What social languages are involved? What sorts of grammatical patterns indicate this?)
- C. figured worlds (What normally comes to mind when we think or talk about this Concept/thing/piece of language? What is taken for granted?)
- D. Intertextuality (How does intertextuality work in the text? In what way does the text borrow words from other oral or written sources?)
- E. Discourses (How is stuff other than language relevant in indicating socially situated identities and activities?)
- F. Conversations (What public debates are relevant to understanding this language and to what Conversations does it contribute?)

*....being used to privilege/disprivilege different sign systems*

## Appendix 5: Email to James P Gee

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### Contact on Blog

1 message

---

**James Gee** <James.Gee@asu.edu> Wed, Nov 16, 2016 at 3:11 AM  
To: "shifadesai@gmail.com" <shifadesai@gmail.com>

I never thought about it--it would have been a good idea though.

**Name:** Shifa Desai ( 2016/11/15 08:37 am )

**Email:** shifadesai@gmail.com **Phone:** 0529191542

*Message:*

Dear Prof Gee, I noticed that you did not choose to illustrate with a diagram the building tasks and tools of inquiry in your books on discourse analysis. Is there reason you did not?

## **Appendix 6: Research instrument: semi-structured narrative interview**

### **RQ 1 How do SIE faculty frame their experience prior to expatriation? How does this framing impact their experience in host countries?**

1. Tell me in as much detail as you can about your early years...your childhood - whatever things you can remember about growing up in the place that you did.
2. Tell me a story that you remember. Something that's poignant, a memory from childhood.
3. Tell me about your relationships with your siblings, parents
4. Moving on now to your teenage years. You were at school. What kind of a student were you?
5. Take me back to when you first started in education. What were your thoughts about being a teacher?
6. Why did you choose to expatriate?

### **RQ 2 How have SIE faculty produced their agency within the socio-political milieu of their experience? Socio-political-economic impressions of expatriate locations**

7. Let's move away from education and talk about the society and the political situations where you found yourself living and working.
  - a. When you first came to \_\_\_\_\_ (country), what do you remember about how you adapted?
  - b. How do you think the \_\_\_\_\_ (nationality) adapt to you in their society?
  - c. Tell me a story you remember about those early years in \_\_\_\_\_ (place)
  - d. So when you came to \_\_\_\_\_ (name of institution), how did you adapt to the culture, the institution, the way they did education?
  - e. You worked in \_\_\_\_\_ (place) for 8 years, why did you leave?
  - f. Why did you apply to the Emirates?

- g. Was it a good choice to come to the UAE?

### **Experiences of educational systems in expatriate experiences**

8. Tell me about the students in \_\_\_\_\_ (place). How would you describe the students that you taught? How did they relate to you as their ESL teacher?
9. Describe to me a working day in \_\_\_\_\_ (name of the educational institution).
10. Have you come across an education system that suits the way you like to work?
11. You've spent most of your adult life in this career, would you recommend this career to anybody to enter as a profession?
12. Let's just look back at the \_\_\_\_\_ (number) countries that you've spent your life in... your working life. Is there anything you've missed out, do you think, by not living in your own country?
13. Complete this statement: I'm a teacher because...
14. Complete this statement: I'm an expat because...